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Subject: intro
Date: Sun, 19 Apr 1998 12:56:55 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Donna J. Smith" <dsmith@emory.edu>
To: Mary Anne Adams <madam04@emory.edu>

introduction and body
Donna Smith
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Writing this essay on my southern and queer experiences has been trying. Because my obstinence in the face of this task has gone much deeper than my normal patterns of procrastination, I was finally forced to figure out why. It's not as if I have nothing to communicate about my subject -- this much I know. I've spent the better part of the last 15 years researching and analyzing queer experiences and representations in southern history and southern literary traditions.

For a time, I tried telling myself that before I could turn my volumes of notes into prose, I must puzzle out my responses to the thorny theoretical issues raised by my subject. For instance, what should the position of queers from the South be in regards to our regional heritage, given that "southern" is popularly defined as more racist, more sexist, more homophobic, and more oppressive in general than any other region of the country? What are the implications of claiming the southern part of our identities -- does identifying as southern require us to defend the indefensible? This popular definition of the "southern," however, is limited to the ideological. Is it possible to speak from a broader definition which takes into account the effects of culture and history on identity formation? Are the two really separable? I have lost myself for weeks at a time in such questions, but finally had to admit that these theoretical quandaries weren't keeping me from writing.

In fact, I greatly enjoy pondering the dilemmas presented by placing the 'queer' within and against the 'southern' and have come up with tentative answers to most of my own questions. I'm the unofficial queer/southern media watchdog: my friends unlucky enough to mention such queer representations of the South as Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, the book or the movie, have to endure a good half-hour rant on the subject. Even if queerly bent, I lecture them, such tales of moonlight, madness and magnolias, just reify notions of the South as the nation's exoticized, eroticized, dark 'other,' propping up myths of national innocence that serve none of our futures. I'm a real kill-joy on the issue. No, my resistance to writing this essay is not theoretical.

I have also tried telling myself that my resistance was just a writerly problem. Having never before written in the genre of the personal essay, I find the points I'm trying to articulate difficult to demonstrate through personal experience. I can't talk about my southern experiences without talking about race and religion and sex and class and gender as well. Balancing these factors feels wiggly -- like juggling water balloons. But in my more rational moments, I know that this is not why I have resisted the writing either. Yes, my subject is complex. Yes, I have assembled enough material for a book, not an essay and it has been hard to narrow it down. But I have done so, carving out a period of 5 years of my life on which to focus, when I moved to San Francisco and a series of events took place that gave new meaning to my queer and southern identities. No, it's not a writerly problem.

At one level, this story I need to tell is simply a coming out narrative, and like all coming out narratives, much of it records a process of growing up, of individuating myself from my family. So I have had to ask myself: does the world really need another coming out story? Have we not exhausted this narrative framework? But this line of logic hasn't been convincing either. Like 'crying, loving and leaving' songs in country music, the genre is inexhaustible, though there are better and worse productions. Coming out is an endless process, so these stories will find an audience and serve a need as long as we keep on living.

But if mine is a coming out story, it's one with a twist: that of my coming out as both queer and southern. And it is not my queer experiences that I have feared revealing, but my southern ones. I'll proudly say to the world, "I'm queer, "but when asked to define myself by region, I want to say, "I'm southern, but..." What I finally came to, in this exploration of my resistance, was the realization that writing about my southern queer experience requires me to reveal how I actually feel about the South, as opposed to how I think I should feel, and therein lies the problem. Again and again, in the writing of this essay, I have faced a reluctance to tell my story in enough specific detail that both the links and the gaps between the southern and the queer in my life will become clear. Deep layers of fear and shame have surfaced -- feelings that I don't like to claim. For telling my story requires that I tell the stories of my parents as well -- their stories are a part of my own -- and in this telling I fear I am betraying their confidence, as well as their efforts to give me a better life, more free from their own prejudices and fears. My mother's repeated maxim: "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all," rings in my ears.

When I think about what's southern about my experience, I don't think about abstract theoretical quandaries; I think about home and family. It's been useful to me to realize how closely popular conceptions of home parallel, in many ways, popular conceptions of the "southern." Home is often represented nostalgically, as a homogenous space, where we all speak the same language, where we don't have to explain ourselves -- a place where we're always welcome. To have embraced this view of home and family and this view of the South, however, would have led me to a kind of cultural schizophrenia. It would have required me to divorce myself from my reality to a dangerous extent. A definition of home and family that has often been more in line with my experience was best summarized by Anatole Broyard. He argued that the "real wars take place not on the battle fields, but in the family trenches..." For me, being queer and southern has required me to see home as a place where I was not necessarily always welcome, and when I was, the burden of translation has at times been so onerous that I wondered if it was worth the effort.

Writing this narrative has required that I reveal my own complicated relationship to home, family and the South. For me, that home was Pawnee, Alabama, a small community 10 miles north of Birmingham, where I was related to about half the folks I grew up around. Those people most important were my deeply religious, fundamentalist Christian mother, a housewife & Sunday School teacher, who also worked as a rural mail carrier for 17 years, and my father, a city of Birmingham policeman for 27 years --whose job made him one of Bull Conner's footsoldiers in the war to preserve Jim Crow.

I could tell a story about this place I'm from and my parents that would reify every clich about the South that has been created, and there would be a certain amount of truth there. But it would be only part of

that story, and its point, only to distance myself from parts of my experience that make me uncomfortable. For I have come to realize that it would take the greatest amount of displacement to see myself as separate from them. I would have to write off whole parts of my experience. That story requires pretending that as a child, I wasn't deeply moved by the messages I received at Pawnee Missionary Baptist church, and the community that I found there. It requires pretending that I wasn't saved 3 times, baptized twice -- somehow it never would stick. It requires remaining silent about my presence at a white flight Christian academy for two years, because my mother was afraid that the children at NewCastle, the all black school less than 2 miles from my home to which we were to be bussed in a court-ordered desegregation plan would find out that our father was a policeman and we would be in danger. It requires forgetting my presence at several George Wallace inaugurations. It would require being silent about this complex inheritance of attitudes towards race and class that leads me to react with fear when encountering someone who looks poorer than me and/or of a different color, and have to fight my immediate assumption that they are dangerous.

But though I can't embrace a simple, celebratory response to my southern queer experiences, neither do I think it is useful to ignore the positive changes I've seen in my lifetime.
At a personal level, this would require me to find it meaningless that at my father's retirement party from his second career working 17 more years as a security officer for the Birmingham City School system -- at that party was present his entire work family, all African American, who sat on the patio of my parent's home in uneasy alliance with his blood family; it would require me to ignore that they clearly loved him. It would require me to dismiss the fact that on my last visit to my parents, I saw that my mother had placed there on the refrigerator, along with the photographs of her grandchildren, nieces and nephews -- all white, a photograph of my brother's grandchildren, Brian and Corwana, both black -- something I thought I would never see in my lifetime. It would require omitting the fact that my parents have providing me consistent emotional and material support in my career as an out, lesbian feminist academic creating scholarship about southern queer experiences. Without telling these stories too, I risk being read within stereotypes of the South which fail to reveal complexities, and I undervalue real change.

What I have come to understand through the process of writing this essay is this: it isn't some abstract loyalty to southern ideologies that I fear revealing -- I feel none of that; it is the parts of me that are thoroughly of this region that I'd rather not make clear. And when I have remained silent about my southern experiences, when I have yeilded "to the impulse to suppress the identifying idiom, to avoid the awkward subject, and to blend inconspicuously into the national pattern," as C. Vann Woodward prophesied some 50 years ago, in that silence there is shame and guilt -- the shame of the victim and the shame and guilt of the oppressor. Of course, I experience both these positions, that of the victim and that of the oppressor. Neither my being lesbian nor female, nor my working class-respectable background override the privileges that I have enjoyed through my skin color and my religious heritage. And if I don't acknowledge all of these parts of me, and the complicated position this places me in, I'm passing. Passing requires that I implicitly accept the notion that it's my lot in life to be mired in shame and guilt, to become stuck in some Faulkneresque 'sins of the father/mother' melodrama. And while shame and guilt can be useful if they point us in the direction

of action, they are not places to live.

On the flip side of this coin, passing also allows the south to be portrayed as hopelessly hegemonic. It requires us to write off this whole region of the country as not worth the effort, even as it dishonors those home-grown radical traditions for social justice, that have been so important to our survivals. For queers from the South, it keeps us thinking that we have to run off to New York, or as I did, to San Francisco, to be queer. But if the devil lies in the details, so do faith and hope. Writing this essay on my southern queer experiences has been a process of learning to reconceptualize this 'telling' -- not as an act of wallowing in shame or guilt, or as a betrayal -- but as an act of faith.

Subject: body
Date: Sun, 19 Apr 1998 13:00:39 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Donna J. Smith" <dsmith@emory.edu>
To: Mary Anne Adams <madam04@emory.edu>

body
Donna Smith
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One of the stories that I tell about myself is that I moved to San Francisco to be gay, and there found out I was southern. And while this story is not literally true -- I had known I was lesbian since I was 16, and of course had always known I was southern -- it does reflect an emotional truth, for it was when I moved to San Francisco in 1982 that these parts of my identity took on new meaning and significance -- it was there that for the first time I felt gay and southern. But significantly, telling this story obscures a whole other set of coming out experiences, for I had moved to New Orleans to be gay, too, three years previous. Awarded music scholarships to several schools, I chose Loyola University in New Orleans in part because I heard that there were lots of gay people in New Orleans. (If my memory is correct, I gleaned this bit of information from the wholly reliable source of Tennessee Williams' memoirs.) It was in New Orleans that I came out to myself more fully, went to my first lesbian bar, told select others that I was lesbian, and lived with a lover for the first time -- all the quintessential 'coming out' experiences. However, I didn't think I could survive being openly gay in New Orleans, and I've had to wonder where I got this idea.

Still living in Birmingham in my late teens, I watched the news coverage of Dan White's murders of Mayor Moscone and Harvey Milk -- gay men overturning and burning police cars outside San Francisco's City Hall, thinking 'this is tragic, but Wow! an openly gay City Supervisor! a gay riot!' Programs such as 20/20 preceded their reportage of any gay issue with that stock file footage of gay leather men walking down Castro street, bare-assed in chaps, arms linked. I remember one particular segment vividly -- it focused on parents afraid to let their young male children walk home from school through the parks of San Francisco because of the supposedly predatory cruising of gay men. In San Francisco, there seemed to be a visibility (for gay men, at least) that if pejorative was highly intoxicating.

In the three years I lived in New Orleans, I studied with growing excitement the gay periodicals carried by the Faubourg Marigny bookstore, learning that not only were there lesbian and gay bars in major cities like New York and San Francisco, but also restaurants, theaters, guest houses, spas, bookstores, cafes. I learned that there was a lesbian-feminist music industry which produced festivals attracting thousands of women from all over the country. At one level, the differences I was observing between San Francisco and New Orleans can be accounted for simply by size; a city of 3 million will invariably offer more opportunities than a city of 1 million, and I wanted to live somewhere where more parts of my identity were satisfied. Yet in retrospect, the meanings I attributed to these differences weren't totally logical. In Birmingham and New Orleans, I didn't look for what I thought I couldn't find. For instance, I realized I was a lesbian at age 16 and began going to gay bars in Birmingham when I was 17, but it was not until

I was 23 that I found out there was a lesbian bar there which had been in existence since the late 1960's.

In 1982, I didn't think I could survive being openly gay in New Orleans, or in the South more generally. Of course there were people who did survive, but I knew very few of them. At some level, I felt I had to leave the South to be gay. I had internalized the notion that gayness was antithetical to southernness, which then functioned as a self-fulfilling prophesy, over- determining my desire to move. And the irony was, that in escaping the South to be gay, I found out I was inescapably southern.

It's very difficult to adequately convey the intensity of those first few months in San Francisco. Enjoying the anonymity of a really big city and its varied stimuli for the first time, I felt myself opening up to all the possibilities of what my life could be like in this place. At the same time, the culture shock was extreme. Obvious contrasts in the landscape -- hillsides which turned a svelte gold rather than deep green in the summer, the scent of eucalyptus rather than pine or hardwood -- underscored the radical difference between San Francisco and New Orleans or Birmingham. But the more dramatic difference was in the people; I had never before lived a place where the population was so diverse -- city streets filled with more than just white and black people, but persons from all parts of East Asia, Mexico, Central and South America. These differences were all exciting but profoundly dislocating as well. I'm sure I was sometimes lonely and homesick, but it wasn't a feeling I allowed myself to surface very often, movement being my preferred method of coping.

Shortly after I arrived I took the first job offered me: working for minimum wage at a gourmet deli in the ritzy Pacific Heights district. Though I was dismayed at not being able to find better paying work, I was desperate to move into the City, and couldn't afford to do so without a job. In this transition period, I had been staying with an Aunt and her family in the posh east bay suburb of Moraga and I was eager to get away from family and begin my new life. The proprietor of this Deli, a woman who had spent a bohemian youth in Greenwich Village, preferred to hire artists or exiles of one sort or another. After I told her I had been to music school to study classical guitar, she asked me when I could start. My co-workers were an education in themselves: Carmine, an artist and mathematician from Sao Paulo and his lover Greg; Vincent, our French chef who had moved to the States after marrying an American woman; Sayed, a student/artist whose father had been a judge under the Shah of Iran, and was now seeking political asylum in the U.S. after the fundamentalist revolution; Liz, a gorgeous Italian-American woman from Detroit who had hoboed all around the country for several years -- her male lover an Asian- American hair dresser with a high-priced salon up the block. All a bit older than I and mostly queer or queer-identified, they became my new work family.

Perhaps the largest culture shock of transition came when I interviewed for and was accepted into a collective dyke household in the Mission District on Guerrero Street. My roommates were all highly-politicized lesbian feminists. Two were in the Women's Studies Program at San Francisco State, and the other worked as an apprentice for a welder. I've told stories about this experience that make it sound like a Dykes to Watch Out For cartoon strip, which gently satirizes the seriousness of lesbian-feminist culture. And indeed, my new roomies were much further along on the lesbian-feminist evolutionary chart than I. The day I moved in, one of my roommates was at work sewing her own Kotex-like

menstrual pads out of some kind of sea-weed material. I swallowed my amazement. One of the requirements for membership in this collective was to have been "in therapy," a process they were all deeply engaged in; my few months of counseling in New Orleans just qualified me. Katherine, the welder, kept a blow-up doll in her room as a punching bag, on which to act out latent aggressions. What seems to me now a fairly wise move, given her general pugnacity, just seemed profoundly weird then; I had not yet been fully socialized into the therapeutic culture. Weeks into my stay there, I was told that the Calvin Klein jeans I wore to my interview cause great debate and almost knocked me out of contention. I had never met women who took their politics so seriously, and applied them at such a practical level. Although these young dykes were all very nice to me and in general I admired their political commitments, I felt very much the provincial among them and only lasted there about 4 months.

The first weekend after my arrival in San Francisco, I ventured forth alone to check out Amelia's -- then the 'happening' dyke bar in the City on Valencia street in the Mission District. And there I met Renee, who would come to define much of my experience in California. Tall, African-American, her androgenous features handsome rather than beautiful -- that night she looked very military, dressed in camouflage fatigues and a gray tank top. As she passed through the aisle of women lining the bar, a Calistoga water in her hand, I caught her attention and asked if she was planning to "join up." She laughed and smiled, and we began a conversation that eventually moved to a quieter, all-night coffee shop up the street, where we exchanged the basic information about ourselves.

I learned that she was 35 (twelve years older than I), from New York City, or Washington Heights in Harlem, to be exact. I learned that she had gone to college at Hampton Institute in Virginia, that she loved to travel (she had been to Japan, to West Africa, and all through Mexico and back on a dime). She'd held lots of jobs, but the one she loved most was teaching at a Black Panther school for several years during the '70's. She learned that I was a new arrival, originally from Birmingham, Alabama, that my ostensible purpose here was to finish my B.A., and that I would be applying to S.F. State and U.C. Berkeley. I don't remember what else I revealed that evening, but the fact that I was from Birmingham seemed to fascinate her as much as everything about her fascinated me. At that point, I don't think I had ever met an educated, middle-class Black woman, much less one from Harlem. That we seemed to enjoy an almost immediate compatibility amazed me even further.

Our mutual southern roots, hers one generation removed, provided some commonality. When she described her parents -- her mother from Millidgeville, Georgia and her father from Jacksonville, Florida -- she did so with phrases and stories that sounded very familiar. Renee had traveled to Georgia regularly as a kid in the 1950's, and told me about those scary, 17-hour long car trips south during the early-civil rights era, when there were few places a middle class Black family with New York license plates could safely stop. Revealing her own preconceptions about race and region, she noted that she had grown up with the idea that white people in the North were okay, that the real baddies were in the South, and held the idea that Black people who stayed down South were stupid. Her experiences at Hampton Institute in Virginia, a historically Black College which attracted African Americans from all over, had blown that notion, as did the increasing racial violence she witnessed in the North as a young adult. Her descriptions of Washington Heights as a safe and

interesting place to grow in the fifties, as well as her discussion of complexities of the Black Panther party (though she had taught at a Black Panther school and admired their educational programs, she had never joined the party herself, turned off by the violence and by the generalized sexism she witnessed), exposed all my own stereotypical assumptions, making clear to me how little I new about racial politics. I flashed back to a memory of sitting around the dinner table in my parent's kitchen watching a news program on Angela Davis and the Black Panthers. It was fronted by that infamous footage of Davis walking into court with a huge Afro and a raised fist, and I recalled my mother's response, her voice dripping with disdain:"You know she's a Communist."

That night Renee promised me a walking tour of San Francisco, the first of many to come in the next couple of months. She opened up her adopted city to me like a well-loved book, neighborhood by neighborhood. We would begin at my flat on Guerrero Street, walk up Mission street to Van Ness, cross over through the government district, cut through the Tenderloin and turn up Polk Street, walking up through the exclusive Pacific Heights neighborhood and down the hill to Fisherman's Wharf. Coming back we'd pass through North Beach and China Town, walking back up Market Street at 3 in the morning, side-stepping the homeless people curled sleeping under boxes and plastic bags in storefronts. I was surprised to find San Francisco a city in many ways as segregated as Birmingham and New Orleans -- it's patterns and peoples just more checkerboarded and diverse. These walks were punctuated by intermittent pit-stops in cafes and bookstores as Renee introduced me to her favorite haunts. We would have dinner at little mom and pop restaurants in the Mission like El Terbol, where for $2.75 you could get a puerco asado dinner, including rice, beans, fried plantains, then walk on to North Beach, where we'd spend hours browsing in the bargain basement of City Lights books, stopping on the way home for a cappucino in Cafe Trieste.

Early in first few months, I held a sidewalk sale outside Cafe Flore, ridding myself of all my conservative, slightly femme dress clothes to raise a little cash. What self-respecting San Francisco dyke would ever need scoop-necked blouses with Peter Pan collars, blue and white striped sear-sucker slacks? I got a modified flat-top in a gay boys' barbershop on the Castro, and for weeks afterward was shocked to see my reflection in storefront windows -- with my hair cut short, I looked remarkably like my father. When Renee and I bundled up for our cross-city jaunts in our army surplus wardrobe of baker's pants or jeans, v-necked wool sweaters over t's, bomber jackets, P.L.O. scarves and desert boots, we must have resembled rag-tag terrorists, but our urban dyke-warrior uniform served its purpose. Occasionally we would hear the word "faggots!" hissed as we passed; more often, we walked the streets as late as 3 am without incident. From Renee, I learned how to move in the city -- that I should stay on well-lit and well-peopled streets, for in the quiet and the dark lay the danger.

Sunday evenings would often find us tea-dancing at the I-Beam, a gay dance club made famous during the hey-day of disco. We'd arrive and immediately peel down to shorts and tee's, maneuvering around the drag queens competing for mirror-space in the women's rest-room. On the dance floor, we'd sweat it out for several hours amidst a hundred gay men in cut-offs and Doc Martins, the bass beat of Diana Ross' "I'm Coming Out," Sister Sledge's "We Are Family," or Sylvester's "You Make Me feel, Mighty Real" thumping in our chests. Early that fall, I noticed a short article, bottom-front page in the New York Times, reporting that an illness similar

to 'Legionnaire's disease' was striking down gay men in New York and San Francisco. With its method of transmission still unknown, I remember the sick feeling I got in the pit of my stomach, wondering "am I too at risk,?" as I sat reading in a cafe on Castro Street.

Renee and I hung out regularly for over a month before we ever even kissed, each one wondering: Are we dating? Is she interested in me? Four months into my move, we took a week long road trip north up to Washington State and back down the California coast on Highway One. This trip which solidified our relationship, which slide into an easy companionability neither of us wanted to break. As had happened before, I fell in love with someone I wanted to become. Renee's big-city background and age gave her an urbanity and sophistication that I felt lacking in myself, even as she wasn't overly invested in that cool remove that I was finding so very alienating in San Francisco youth culture. Though nothing like anyone I had ever known, something in her spoke to me of home and safety. That trip was passed with unending stories about ourselves -- our home, families, friends and lovers. In some ways, my life with Renee was one long story -- its meanings constantly changing as we integrated new information and perspectives with the old. By early winter, she asked me to move in with her, and because it seemed silly to keep my room in the flat on Guerrero Street as I was so rarely there, I did.

Those first few months after my move to San Francisco were filled with a thousand new sights and experiences, but the most dramatic change came when, 3 months into my move, I received the news that my parents knew I was lesbian. I didn't forthrightly come out to my family; I just backed out of the closet, leaving an increasingly broad trail of breadcrumbs in that summer before I moved to San Francisco. News gradually spread through the Smith family grapevine: several years earlier, I had told my father's sister, an aunt with whom I was very close. At some point, she told another aunt, who eventually told my father in response to his asking: Do you think Donna's gay? At the same time they found out I was lesbian, my parents found out that I was involved with Renee. I was never able to untangle which part of this news my mother found most upsetting.

As often happens, the knowledge that a child is gay or lesbian can expose deeply-rooted troubles in a family. For my parents, it brought to a crisis the profound differences in their personalities and beliefs. My father's response typified his personality: he wrote that of course his love for me had not changed, noting only that "I didn't like carrots and peas at your age either, but I do now, so keep an open mind." Though somewhat patronizing, as parents often are in dealing with young adult children, his comparison of my sexual object choice to food tastes inserted some levity into this unfolding drama. In general, Dad was relaxed, fun-loving and affectionate, and we had always gotten along well. As I moved into my late teens, we enjoyed an increasingly close relationship, spending hours together drinking coffee and talking books and politics. My mother's response was a different story, as I knew it would be.

A very demanding person, mother had always held both herself and her children to impossibly high standards. She drove herself and us kids hard, and in her words, "was not afraid to break the child labor law," in the effort to teach us how to work. A deeply religious person, mother was there every time the doors opened at Pawnee Missionary Baptist Church, and we were too. Though it never seemed to bring her much peace or happiness, she took her spiritual life very seriously. Periods of manic

activity were punctuated by deep depression and anger. My two older sisters, my younger brother and I all spent a great deal of energy trying to master the art of 'figuring mother out' in the effort of self protection. It wasn't uncommon to walk into the house and finding her standing over the kitchen sink washing dishes, tears streaming down her cheeks for no apparent reason. Neither was our response uncommon: each one of us wondering individually, "What did I do?" By the time I was in my early teens, she and I began to engage in open conflict. Though I loved her, I despaired of ever meeting her approval and had grown angry with the effort. That brief period just made both of us very unhappy, though, so I switched strategies, and instead just tried to avoid her. This wasn't difficult, because I was working almost 40 hours a week by my junior year in high school. Mother was for the first time working outside the home as well. She had taken a job as a rural mail carrier, work which was physically very exhausting and as a consequence, she became much less demanding -- we reached a kind of stalemate.

My being lesbian and willing to publicly claim this difference somehow contained all the elements necessary to set off the emotional time-bomb which had been long been brewing in mother. I thought I had readied myself well for this event, becoming financially independent and moving to the far side of the continent. Still, I was completely taken aback by the viciousness of her response. For several months, I received three and four letters a week -- hate filled missives in her campaign of emotional terrorism. Even though I now tell myself that I have forgiven her, the meanness and crudity of some of her words still glow in my memory, some 15 years later, like bad memories will do. In one of these letters she asserted my criminality, observing that my "father has had to arrest so many of them [homosexuals]." In another, she exposed her own racist paranoia, telling me that Renee would "slit my throat for a buck." One letter simply enclosed a snapshot of myself I had sent home -- me playing tourist, posing in front of the monkey cage at the San Francisco Zoo. My face had been X'd out so fiercely that the ball point pen she used rippled and tore through the photo paper. In some ways what was most maddening was that she framed these hateful letters in the language of fundamentalist christianity, beginning and ending with her love and her prayers that I would turn from my sinful ways to find forgiveness and peace in Jesus: "It's not too late. I want to help. I love you, Mom."

Not all of my family reacted so negatively, by any means. My sisters and brother all responded as well as my father, and though they were preoccupied with dealing with my mother's reaction, they supported me as they could. Deeply disturbed, she was having difficulty working and was placed on anti-depressants. Eventually, an aunt recommended a Christian family counselor. My unlucky siblings, my sister and brother still living in Birmingham were compelled to go along to this session -- I'm not sure they've ever forgiven me for being the agent of this circumstance. Word came back that it was a disaster, making clear that no one but my mother had a problem with me being a dyke. My brother and sister did have a problem with her reaction to this news, however, as well as their own on-going difficulties with her. Reportedly, mother was enraged and deeply offended by the experience, accusing my father of turning the children against her. After 33 years of marriage, my parents separated for several weeks. Years later, during an argument with my father over queer politics, in which I had accused him of fence- sitting, he responded defensively: "Your mother and I almost got a divorce over this!" 'Maybe you should have,' was my silent reply, though unable to

really imagine it.

At first, I tried to toss these letters off. Shell-shocked, I felt somewhat badly that I had created such havoc in the family, but at the same time was relieved to be 3000 miles away, and didn't want to let mother's madness spoil the pleasures of my new home and new friends. I tried to carry on as usual. At work, I'd revel my co-workers with juicy tidbits from the latest letter. They were plainly shocked and appalled and I quickly realized it wasn't the material of good jokes. Intellectually, I knew that mother's reaction was not about me, that her own demons were surfacing, but emotionally, this separation was impossible. Barely conscious of what I was doing, I stopped eating for almost a month, existing on a diet of coffee and cigarettes, becoming absolutely skinny for the first time in my life. Like those people who self-mutilate, I needed some physical release and wouldn't have given my mother the satisfaction of killing myself. Then she could say, "see, I told you so...this difference is chosen and killing;" though a part of me had died -- my naivete regarding the depths to which she would sink in her controlling behavior.

The irony didn't escape me that my mother would probably be pleased by the resulting weight loss, having always encouraged me to take off that twenty extra pounds I had kept on since adolescence -- my unconscious defense against more male attention than I could handle. ("Lose ten pounds and you'll be a regular sex-bomb," was the family doctor's unsolicited advice during a visit for strep throat, me perched on the end of the examining table, running a temperature of 102 degrees -- my unconscious defense suddenly becoming conscious.)

During this period, I immersed myself in the political battles being waged in Central America, reading weighty tomes on the history of U.S. colonization in the region. In 1983, these revolutions and insurgencies were daily news in San Francisco, with so many Central American refugees and immigrants making this place their home. Perhaps I was seeking perspective: whatever horror stories of emotional abuse I had to tell couldn't compete with the stories I was reading out of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua -- people who had witnessed the slaughter of their entire family. In these places, torture, murder and mutilation were then so routinized that there were agreed upon dump spots for the bodies. I fantasized about becoming fluent in Spanish and traveling to Central and South America as a journalist, and made plans to finish my B.A. as a Latin American History major.

Three relationships were saving during this period: my on-going relationship with my father, who stayed in regular correspondence; a relationship I established with a free therapist through the Pacific Center, a lesbian and gay counseling service, and most importantly, that with Renee. Her calm support, forcing me out on walks, urging me to carry on with my plans for school, provided a much needed anchor during this period. My applications to Berkeley and San Francisco State were coming due, but in my current state, the pages and pages of questions and the detailed financial aid documents to be assembled were simply overwhelming me. Renee made a coffee date to help me go through and complete them.

Sometime that fall, Renee had written her own mother about her new lover, and enclosed a photograph of me. Then in her 70's, Mrs. Manigault was still living in Harlem on Riverside Drive. She wrote back immediately, telling Renee that she was glad to hear she had found a "friend," but pointedly remarked on the photograph: "that child's not happy." Later, after Renee had revealed more of my own mother's response

to our relationship, Mrs. Manigault gave Renee some sharply worded advice: "Pay no attention to those peckerwoods!" she responded, echoing the language of her Georgia childhood.

After several months, I finally summoned up the will to put a stop to these letters through the suggestion of the therapist I was seeing. Putting them all into a big manilla envelop, I included a curt note instructing mother that if I ever received another letter like these, I would cut off all communication. The letters stopped. I had won a temporary victory, though it gradually felt hollow, for I then had to come to terms with the fact that my deep anger revealed my love and desire for her approval -- that was the real humiliation.

If in those first few months in San Francisco I attempted to recreate myself, to distance myself from my provincial southern roots, my coming out set in place a chain of events that catapulted me back home emotionally. Not surprisingly, my southern identity was taken for granted when I was in the South -- I had never before felt southern until I moved to California. What did this mean? Was I always/already southern, or was I simply becoming southern through others' eyes because they saw me as such?

I also began to wonder if region could in any way explain my mother's response to my being lesbian. At one level, there seemed to be nothing particularly southern about it. Parents everywhere feel justified in committing the most vile acts upon learning they have a gay or lesbian child, and will use any weapon at hand. But mother's blatant racism, as well as her religiosity, all reflected elements that are considered defining of this region. In describing mother's behavior to my new friends, I could see them trying to use her southernness as somehow explanatory as well. But I was highly ambivalent about this move; to dismiss her as another 'southern' nut-case seemed to dissolve her of moral agency, and above all, I wanted to hold her individually accountable.

Subject: conclusion
Date: Sun, 19 Apr 1998 13:05:09 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Donna J. Smith" <dsmith@emory.edu>
To: Mary Anne Adams <madam04@emory.edu>

conclusion
Donna Smith
copyright: 4-16-98

Gradually the smoke cleared, the newness of the city faded, and I settled in. Accepted into U.C. Berkeley as a transfer student, I began in the fall of '83. Much of my emotional energy was still spent trying to absorb and integrate all the changes that had taken place, but being a student gave me a much needed focus outside of myself, and more importantly, Berkeley gave me the time and space to explore some of the questions raised my first year in San Francisco, even as it created new ones.

Though the next three years were spent more in reflection than action, it was a period of intense discovery. For instance, it was at Berkeley that I discovered I was considered working- class. Being southern was a part of this mix, for most Californians saw the south as working class and poor in general. It had never really occurred to me that my parent's occupations, as well as their lack of college educations, were considered determining of my class status. I arrived at Berkeley with no understanding of the 'name magic' attached to this university. Although I did know that it had a reputation as radical, since it was the site of major protests in the sixties, I didn't know that it was considered one of the best public universities in the country -- its graduate school then rated the top in the nation. Most students who are accepted into Berkeley went to high schools that offered advanced, college-prep coursework and an array of extracurricular activities. In stark contrast, my own secondary education was completely lacking in rigor; when I returned to public school after spending the 7th and 8th grades at the white-flight christian academy, I was tracked into its most advanced academic program, but rarely ever needed to bring books home to study, and still made excellent grades. Although I was uncomfortable with some of my peers assumptions about my region and class, I began to realize that in truth, I had not experienced many of the privileges they took for granted.

The education I sought and received at Berkeley met a visceral need to somehow bridge the gap between my past and present, both of which were raising so very many questions for me. By 1983, feminist studies and perspectives were institutionalized (though still marginal) at Berkeley, and the feminist notion that the 'personal was political' was in full flower. This idea appealed to me: it seemed crucial to figure out what meanings to attach to my own experiences: What did it mean that I was now thought to be working class? Why was my educational background obviously so much poorer than that of my peers? Why was the South in general poorer than the rest of the nation? How did growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, site of some of the most entrenched resistance to the Civil Rights movement, affect me? What did it mean that my dad, who had always been my strongest parental ally, had been 'hands on' enforcer in that battle? How should I interpret his silence around this experience? What did it mean that my primary relationship was with a Black woman? And though I don't

recall being conscious of this at the time, I'm sure that at some level, I was asking myself if it were possible to love Renee and love my parents too, without betraying her. If my years at Berkeley didn't answer all of these questions, they at least gave me the tools to seek the answers on my own.

As planned, I began Berkeley as a Latin American history major, but found the program over-enrolled, with huge classes in which I felt like a number. Soon I gravitated towards subject matters that were closer to home. During the next several years I entered into a kind of 'textual southernness,' as I immersed myself in southern history and literature. It seems somewhat ironic, considering the common conflation of "southern" and "white," that I found most of my support for this work in the Ethnic Studies program.

During the late seventies and early eighties, women of color were beginning to vocalize their discomfort with the deep class and race biases they found in feminist thought, as the limits of narrow constructions of gender identity became clearer. Their criticisms made a lot of sense to me, and I was fortunate to study with some of the leading scholars of this movement: Barbara Christian and Paula Gunn Allen, among others. Christian was the first scholar to trace a black female literary tradition. Paula Gunn Allen's Third World Literature class articulated the ways in which deep biases surfaced in the canonization of 'great' literature. Both of these scholars brought the study of literature and history alive, and made it seem both necessary and important. Through their classes in the Ethnic Studies Department at Berkeley, I was for the first time exposed to the works of writers of color, and histories of radical resistance.

Through course work and research into southern history and literature, I began to realize how little I knew about this place I was from. I was shocked to find the existence of a southern white anti-racist tradition and found myself angry that this information had been unavailable to me as I grew up in the South. Historians like Jacqueline Dowd Hall were beginning to articulate a feminist perspective on the role of women in southern history, challenging the reality, if not the myth, of the "southern lady." Hall's assertion that most southern women did not have the privilege to be ladies, even if they might have aspired to the title, resonated with what little I knew about my own family history. In literature, feminist critic Anne Goodwyn Jones' landmark study Tomorrow is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936, published in 1981, examined the ideal of the 'southern lady' from the perspective of literature written by privileged white southern women of the period, arguing that their novels suggested deep ambivalence about the supposedly chivalric ideal of the 'southern lady.' Even more exciting was to find analyses and representations of southern white lesbians.

Randomly exploring the periodical stacks in Berkeley's library, I came across old copies of a lesbian feminist journal called Feminary, published in North Carolina, and was simply stunned. I had never imagined that there were organized lesbian feminist communities in the South; this journal's contents made evident that they had been active since the early 1970's. While browsing at Cody's bookstore on Telegraph Avenue, I stumbled upon Mab Segrest's 1985 collection of personal and literary essays, My Mama's Dead Squirrel-- a work that has been so foundational to southern queer studies -- in which she sketches out a southern white lesbian literary tradition from the early 20th century. Through Segrest's work, I discovered Lillian Smith, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and numerous other southern lesbian feminist writers. Clearly, I was seeking models of

resistance; I needed to know that there were southern white lesbians and feminists out there who had transgressed this culture's conventions and lived to tell about it.

When I moved to California, I held the attitudes towards race relations of most of my generation -- those of us who grew up in the 1960's and '70's. I saw racism as limited to individual acts, and felt that the revolution had been won, in the main. With the arrogance of extreme youth, I thought that I could escape the sins of my parent's generation through good intentions and right actions. In other words, if I was nice to individual people of color whom I encountered, I'd be all right. Falling in love with Renee and getting to know her history, coupled with the blatant racism of my mother's response to this relationship, forced me to reconceptualize these ideas about race. I was beginning to realize that I couldn't escape racism by an individual act of will -- that it functions in much more subtle and pervasive ways. In some ways this discovery was validating, because it resonated with my recent experiences.

If I arrived in San Francisco with some notion of a mythical queer solidarity that would override differences of culture, class and gender, it wasn't a notion I was able to retain very long. How was I to explain the shoddy treatment Renee and I often experienced in shops on Castro? Did the white gay sales clerks in All American Boy (a name I began to think of as quite apt) assume that they couldn't be bothered waiting on us, that we couldn't possibly afford the over- priced Levi's stacked floor to ceiling, because a) we were women, or b) because we were both women and butchy dykes, or c) because Renee was Black? It was impossible to untangle. My new perspective also required that I explore the effects of my own acculturation into racism. Without having a name for this process, I was beginning to engage in what we would now call "deconstructing whiteness," and this was not a particularly comfortable process.

One price of racism in this culture is that any white person who is involved with a person of color (or vice versa), has at some point to examine their motives. And I had to ask myself: What made me willing to speak to Renee first, that night I met her, before any of the white women in the bar? Was she simply the first friendly face I encountered? Did I assume that she, one of the few 'spots' in this predominantly white dyke club, felt as out of place as I did, and was thus less afraid of risking rejection with her? Was she my insurance card against being perceived as the typical southern white racist? The more I learned about racial politics, the more I realized that our relationship had to be marked by the myriad of differences that race, culture, and region make. But I also knew that it wasn't useful or accurate to characterize the basis of our relationship as some working out of white guilt on my part, or black resentment/anger on the part of Renee. Beyond that acknowledgement, I wasn't sure where to go.

In "The Breakdown of the Bicultural Mind," Cherrie Moraga notes that "in love, color blurs but never wholly disappears." I have a visual memory from several years into my relationship with Renee, when we were out shopping and split up to run separate errands. Standing at the bus stop watching her walk away from me, the thought that "She's Black!" suddenly popped into my head. And then, instantaneously: "Of course she's Black! Why did I think this thought?" Perhaps I was mirroring those thoughts I saw in the faces of people walking past her, as they registered her physical attributes, but it was a very surreal moment. My relationship with Renee illuminated both the reality and unreality of

race.

Only twice during my 5 years in California did I go back home for a visit, and both visits were quite tense, as I began to figure out what kind of relationship I could have with my family as a whole, given the deep rift between my mother and I. During one of these trips, I asked my father to tell me about his experiences as a policeman that summer of '63. I had just completed a course on the Civil Rights movement that had moved me deeply, and wanted to get his perspective. He responded defensively, resenting what he assumed was my knee-jerk radical position. Dad argued that contrary to popular perception, the movement in Birmingham was not non-violent, that rocks and pieces of pavement were being chunked at them -- that they were outnumbered and at times afraid. He told me how scary it had been to be called out at 2 in the morning to arrive on the scene of a bombing and find himself the only white person present -- a 'mob' of angry black folks gathered around. He described how the "northern" press took a photo of him "just trying to get hand-cuffs on a woman" that made it appear that he was clubbing her on the head -- a photo that appeared in one of the major news magazines.

I was taken aback, wanting to hear him say anything else but this, and thinking, "But you had guns, firehoses, clubs! Bull Conner even had a tank, for Christ's sake!" Instead I changed the subject and sat silently, trying to absorb the realization that this father who had never hit me with anything but a rolled-up newspaper, and that in play, had undoubtedly acted in ways I couldn't fathom in him. I was beginning to realize how much I wanted to protect my image of dad as a peace-maker, and how his silence around his work functioned to protect this image in my eyes. Now his response makes more sense to me. At least at an unconscious level, all of these white cops must have sensed that they were looking at three centuries worth of anger and resentment -- the return of the repressed. Here I was, a daughter who more or less worshipped him, asking him the impossible question of "How could you?" -- never a question a parent wants to hear.

Because my father always made clear that he didn't particularly like policework -- that it was boring in the main, and underpaid -- I remember once asking him why he became a cop. He described coming out of the Army and going to work at the 'pipe company' (the iron and steel industry being the major employer in Birmingham), but since kept it going out on strike and he was married with a new baby, he needed more stable employment. When dad wasn't working over-time policing football games or concerts, he worked various other schemes to supplement his paycheck. When I was very young, he had a herd of cattle kept in a rented pasture by the airport, which he sold to local butcheries. For a time, he trained as an insurance adjustor with his brother's State Farm Agency, but for some reason didn't attempt the test that would have licensed him to move into this work full-time. He constantly bought and sold old cars to fix up and sell for a slight profit. In the summer of 1963 -- the period of the worst of the police violence, dad was 35 years old and had 4 children, the youngest of which was only a year old. Had he been inclined to take what I would have considered the appropriate moral stance, what would have been the effects? Would I have done anything differently, had I been him? I had to admit that I seriously doubted it.

During my years in California, dad regularly stayed in touch with me through audiotapes -- his favorite toy being a micro-cassette recorder. Always, Dad began these tapes with his best wishes for both Renee and I, fully acknowledging our relationship. He kept the recorder with him and

recorded everything from phone conversations with relatives and friends (often without their knowledge) to conversations around the dinner table at family gatherings. Sometimes, these tapes simply narrated his movement through his day:

I'm on Tarrant Highway now, heading home. I just passed the ABC plant, the water tower, Gurley's Insurance -- you know, they've gone out of business. Here's the Waffle House, City Hall, that new Chinese Restaurant. I'm coming up on Pete's office (his brother, the insurance agent) now, and I see his car out front. Think I'll pop in and have a cup of coffee with him. In other tapes, he'd update me on local politics:

The mayor's race seems like its running more on the merits of each individual, which is real good. Arrington predicts he'll get 20% of the white vote, and Katapodis -- polsters predict he'll get 3%. It's not quite that way with the council race. There's been quite a few racial slurs thrown in that one. In fact, one council woman's car was fire-bombed out in the eastern section. The tapes were a visceral pleasure, Dad's familiar voice conjuring up sights deeply embedded in my memory. I was amazed that he took the time to make them, and tried to reciprocate the effort, but found myself awkward talking into the recorder, and uncomfortable imagining how dad would receive the realities of my life.

Sometimes I didn't know what to make of the content, however, such as a conversation he recorded with my great Uncle Arthur Lee telling stories that revealed casual racism, the word "nigger" being sprinkled freely throughout. I wasn't surprised by my great uncle's racism -- that was common knowledge; I just wasn't sure what message my father was communicating by including this conversation on the tape.

But neither did I know how to interpret a conversation dad recorded with his African American co-worker, Johnny Wilson. Having a slow night at work and wanting to finish off a tape and get it in the mail to me, he turned the recorder on and left it taping as he and Johnny talked about everything from their efforts to keep their children's cars in good running order to the local political battle then being waged in city government over a proposed horse track. Running aground, dad prompted Johnny to describe for the record his years working for a Jewish shoe salesmen in Birmingham, a story he'd obviously heard before. Johnny described how this merchant took him in at age 12 and taught him the trade, how he had worked and traveled with him for 30 odd years, learning in the process a lot about Jewish culture -- even how to speak Yiddish. As Johnny ended this interview, he spoke directly to me on tape: "We all get along fine here -- got a good understanding. I'm glad I met your father. It's been nice talking to you." Johnny's closing statements seemed to implicitly address the fact that this friendship crossed race lines. Though these tapes demonstrated my father's continued love and support for me, they also rooted me -- not allowing me to write off my family, or to oversimplify race relations, or any other element of his world.

In 1987, I left the Bay Area and moved back South. In part, this was a practical decision: I wanted to continue to pursue scholarship focused on southern women's history and literature, and not surprisingly, the best programs in this field were here. But moving back was also about my desire to make peace with this history of mine, which didn't seem possible from such a distance. It's been a very instructive period, these ten years since my return.

During my first year of graduate school here at Emory, I undertook an oral history project of my grandmother Hewitt, my mother's mother, then in her late 80's. In the process of collecting my grandmother's history, my hidden agenda was to find answers to questions I had about own my mother's history. Through the years, my mother and I had reached a uneasy truce: she had apologized for and attempted to explain some of her earlier behavior with stories about her childhood. I accepted this apology, but kept a wary distance. Growing up, I had only heard the most benign snatches of stories about her childhood -- the 'we were poor but hard-working and happy' version. As she and I began to try and communicate across our major differences, I began to hear bits and pieces of another, much harsher story, which usually surfaced at the end of major arguments between us -- what I began to think of as ritualized blood-lettings.

By making the collecting of this oral history seem like work, my whole family pitched in and helped: I collected interviews not only from my grandmother, but also from a great uncle, my mother and two of her sisters. They were all much more forthcoming than I expected. What materialized from this oral history was a story of mental illness, violence, poverty and abuse -- of my mother and her sisters' deep discomfort from growing up with a father who was paranoid schizophrenic; a story of his physical abuse of their mother, and the constant climate of fear and poverty which they endured. Though I had never heard the its details before, this tale felt uncannily familiar. I had of course grown up with its effects -- though not verbalized, this story was told in silence and action.

It also helped me interpret my mother's behavior. I don't claim to have complete understanding, but this much at least, seems clear: My mother devoted her tremendous energy to giving her children the tools to pass seamlessly into the middle class and beyond, through our training in how to be smart, polite, straight, christian and white. That she envisioned this training as safety -- safety at the very least from poverty and its debilitating effects on the spirit -- is clear. In her mind, me being lesbian and willing to tell cast me outside that mythical protected circle. Taking for my lover a Black woman gave me a hypervisibility, in fact, for why else would we be together? No one could say we were sisters. She must have felt it was her job as the mother -- enforcer of cultural norms -- to steer me back into that circle. When I came out, my mother had access to no public discourse, either moral or legal, that would make me socially acceptable. I came to see how her tactics -- or her emotional abusiveness, though powerful, were the tactics of the weak. Thankfully, she has gradually given up this effort, and I have given up the effort of staying angry with her. We still aren't close -- she isn't comfortable hearing the details of either my personal or professional life, which creates serious limits, but she makes her love for me clear in other ways, and I've tried to reciprocate the effort.

When I returned to the South, I returned with the assumption that it was probably going to be more difficult to be openly lesbian here. I've had a number of experiences since which have challenged this notion, and revealed my own internalized assumptions about what kind of life it is possible to lead in the South. For one, I never dreamt it possible to get a doctorate degree as an out lesbian feminist whose scholarship focuses on queer southerners. I never dreamt that Emory, the institution in which I do my work, would change its attitude toward its queer members so profoundly, and over such a short time -- extending equal protection and

benefits to its queer faculty, students and staff, creating an Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Life, and funding a queer studies program. Ten years ago, I never thought I would find myself organizing, with others, "Queering the South: a gathering of lesbian, gay, bisexual artists, academics and activists." Nor did I think I would ever see the Gospel Girls, a gay gospel drag show, perform in Glenn Memorial Auditorium, a Methodist Church on Emory's campus whose sanctuary doubles as performance space for Emory -- this latter is silly stuff, you might say, but symbolically very powerful.

I no longer have any real investment in answering the question of whether or not the South is more oppressive than any other region of the country -- I'm not sure how one would measure that effectively, anyhow. For me, identifying as southern means identifying my relationship to this place where I've chosen to do my work, and my relationship to its people. And yes, it probably is more rewarding to me to do this work here. I like to see my own and other's assumptions about what is typically southern exploded. Of course, change never comes without cost, but we pay that cost where ever we live and do our work.

FUND FOR SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES

"Change not Charity"

August 11, 1998

Mary Anne Adams
Zami
PO Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

Dear Ms. Adams:

Just a quick reminder: it has been a while since FSC has received a program report and financial report from Zami. We do not need anything fancy, but I do need a brief summary of your program activities the past six months. If you send out any kind of newsletter, or prepare reports for your governing body, copies of those will probably be adequate. While we recognize that reporting on activities is not what any of us are in this work to do, it is a necessary part of the work. Our auditors, and the IRS, require that we have up to date information on all projects that FSC supports. Please get me a report soon, and give me a call if you have any questions.

Your most recent check should be mailed later this week.

Sincerely,

Jack

Jack Beckford

547 Ponce de Leon Avenue, NE • Suite 100 • Atlanta, Georgia 30308 • (404) 876-4147 • Fax (404) 876-3453
Member of the Funding Exchange and Georgia Shares

YOUTHPRIDE ATLANTA

Because No One Should Grow Up Invisible or Alone.

August 11, 1998

Mary Ann Adams
ZAMI
PO Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

Dear Mary Ann,

You may or may not be familiar with YouthPride. Briefly, YouthPride, Inc. is an organization begun in January of 1995 to address the needs of and provide support for Atlanta's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth and young adults.

We have recently moved into our first home, the YouthPride Center, and are now completing a strategic planning process that will help us determine how to more effectively respond to the youth and young adults we serve. As a part of that process, we have identified a group of community "stakeholders" whose opinions we seek to complete our understanding of both the job we are currently doing and those needs and resources that we may not have yet discovered. As someone who works with an organization supporting Atlanta's youth or Atlanta's gay community or someone who has expressed interest in and support of YouthPride specifically, your opinion is one we value.

In the next few weeks, a YouthPride Board member will be contacting you to set up a time to ask you a few questions about your understanding of YouthPride and the needs of Atlanta's LGBTQ youth. Again, whether or not you are familiar with YouthPride your opinion and perspective are important to us. The questions are brief and can be answered in a telephone conversation or over a cup of coffee, depending on your interest and schedule.

We greatly appreciate your willingness to take a few minutes and assist us in our strategic planning process. If you are interested, we would be glad to share with you the results of our planning when the process is completed. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Linda Ellis
Executive Director

Subject: bio
Date: Sat, 19 Sep 1998 12:38:37 EDT
From: Nigerati1@aol.com
To: madam04@emory.edu

Madam....

DONNA ROSE...POET PROVOCATEUR

has been writing and reading her literary offerings since 1978.

in 1985, she began to add elements of theater to her recitations to graphically illustrate for her audience the shadings of her verbal images.

she has written, produced, and performs extensively in the Chicago area and has read her work in Atlanta, Indiana, New jersey, Wisconsin, and Washington, D. C. she has generously donated her performance to benefit many organizations in their fund raising efforts.

her works have been published in Ache, Black Lace, Literary Express, Essence, Outlines, Windy City Times, and currently as a contributor to Blacklines publications.

Donna Rose has often reflected a social consciousness in her work which reflects her long standing community involvement as past president of Literary Exchange; editorial board member, Well Woman Journal; Performance Committee member, N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago; Guild Complex of Chicago, committee member; Friend of Mountain Moving Coffee House; past member of Gay and Lesbian Police Advisory Council, and currently serves on the Steering Committee for Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays.

her fondest achievement is being named a recipient of the Gwendolyn Brooks New Poets Award in 1993, which almost "ties" with having her grandson, Nickky, enjoy listening to her read.

FUND FOR SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES

"Change not Charity"™

February 3, 2000

Ms. Mary Anne Adams
125 Greenwood Place
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Dear Ms. Adams:

Thanks for your support of the upcoming Sweet Honey In The Rock benefit performance. Enclosed are your six (6) tickets for the Friday, February 18, 2000, 7:00 p.m. performance being held at Spelman College.

Again, thanks and enjoy the concert.

Sincerely,

Alice Jenkins

Alice Eason Jenkins
Coordinator

Enclosure: 6 tickets

4285-G Memorial Drive • Decatur, Georgia 30032 • (404) 292-7600 • Fax (404) 292-7835
Member of the Funding Exchange and Georgia Shares.

October 29, 1998

Dear Mary Anne,

Thanks for sending recent ZARI info. I hope all the events went well.

I've just returned from my second trip to CUBA. It is a wonderful country. You've got to go. (Old flyer included for your files). There are some long overdue photos. Remember Kenny from Jackson, who was determined to "let his women take care of him." NEGROES, YOUR PEOPLE (smile)!

Love,

Evelyn

P.S. Your no-smiling niece is a drip!

The Hurt Building, Suite 401 Atlanta, GA 30303 **Tel** 404-577-5000 **Fax** 404-589-0000 **www.atlantawomen.org**

ATLANTA
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

Zami
P.O. ~~Box 2502~~
Decatur, GA 30031

30031/3502

ATLANTA
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

October 28, 1998

Mary Ann Adams
Zami
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

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Stephanie A. Davis, Director

Dear Ms. Adams:

We are delighted to announce we are starting year two of the Girls to Women Technical Assistance Project. **On Tuesday, November 17, 1998, 3:00 P.M. in the Logan Room, first floor of the United Way Building,** 100 **Edgewood Ave., Atlanta,** we will host an orientation session for you to meet the T/A Providers and "shop" their services. You may bring the enclosed application or send it in advance. We encourage you to attend the orientation, but it is not required to receive technical assistance.

Last year, we offered technical assistance in Capacity Building; Entrepreneurship; Gender Equity in Math, Science, and Technology; Mentoring; Rites of Passage; and Teen Sexuality/Postponing Parenthood. Seventeen organizations applied. Seven organizations started or strengthened their girl's entrepreneurship programs. Moving in the Spirit revamped its programming to be more culturally sensitive through Rites of Passage technical assistance while Cool Girls and Boys and Girls Club learned new strategies for teen pregnancy prevention. Bridge Builders, Newcomer's Network, and Girl's Outdoor Adventures in Leadership went on to receive a total of $28,000 in grants from the Atlanta Women's Foundation for related programming.

Atlanta Women's Foundation's mission to be a catalyst for change in the lives of women and girls stretches beyond financial support. Through continuing this project, we are building bridges to the human resources that exist in this city that have the expertise to strengthen and help insure the longevity of girl-serving organizations. If you would like to refer an organization or have questions, call me, 404.577.5000. Please RSVP for the orientation by November 16th.

Sincerely,

Patsy White
Program Officer

The Hurt Building, Suite 401 Atlanta, GA 30303 **Tel** 404-577-5000 **Fax** 404-589-0000 **www.atlantawomen.org**

ATLANTA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
GIRLS TO WOMEN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT
APPLICATION GUIDELINES 1998-99

This project is designed to strengthen existing girl-serving organizations in metro Atlanta by linking human resources to your technical assistance and training needs at low or no cost to your organization. Technical Assistance is available in nine areas:

- **Capacity Building**
- **Computer Literacy**
- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Fund Raising and Resource Development**
- **Gender Equity in Math and Science**
- **Mentoring**
- **Rites of Passage**
- **Teen Sexuality/Postponing Parenthood**
- **Violence Prevention**

Atlanta Women's Foundation (AWF) prioritizes grassroots organizations that serve adolescent and pre-adolescent girls in low-income communities and communities of color. To apply for technical assistance:

1. Determine what T/A you would like to receive. (descriptions are included)
2. Fill out the application.
3. Assess if you should pay a fee. If your organization's annual operating budget is under $25,000, you pay nothing. If it's over $25,000, there will be a small fee of $1.00-per-girl served by your organization. For example: if you serve 25 girls and you would like technical assistance in one area, you pay a one-time fee of $25.00 to the Atlanta Women's Foundation. If you would like technical assistance in two areas such as Entrepreneurship and Rites of Passage, you pay $50.00 ($1.00 per girl served x two technical assistance areas). If three areas are chosen, you pay $75.00 for 25 girls.
4. You may sign up for a maximum of three technical assistance topics.
5. You pay your fee when you agree to work with a technical assistance provider.

You may mail or fax your application to AWF or bring it with you to the **Girls to Women Technical Assistance Project Orientation Tuesday, November 17, 1998 at 3:00 P.M. in the Logan Room, 1st floor of the United Way Building.**

Contact Patsy White, Program Officer of the Atlanta Women's Foundation for questions or directions at 404.577.5000. You can submit applications to her at Atlanta Women's Foundation, The Hurt Building, Suite 401, Atlanta, GA 30303, (404) 589-0000 Fax, pwhite@atlantawomen.org.

FAX TO: Patsy White (404) 589.0000 or mail to Atlanta Women's Foundation, The Hurt Bldg, Suite 401, Atlanta, GA 30303, or email, pwhite@atlantawomen.org.

Girls to Women Technical Assistance Project Application Form

Organization: _____ Project Name: _____

Address: _____

D: _____ E: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Contact Person(s): _____

Organization's Total Annual Operating Budget: _____ Project Budget: _____

Do you have a board of directors? ____Yes ____ No Do you have 501(c)(3) status ? ____Yes ____ No

How many girls does your organization serve?: _____ How many girls will this project serve?: _____

How many paid staff work with the girls?: _____ How many mentors work with the girls?: _____

How many volunteers (non mentors) work with the girls?: _____ Age range of girls?: _____

Mission Statement: _____

_____

_____

Project Purpose: _____

_____

Technical Assistance Topic	New Programming?
1. _____	____ Yes ____ No
2. _____	____ Yes ____ No
3. _____	____ Yes ____ No

Total Fee: # of girls served _____ X (multiply) $1.00 = _____X (multiply) # of TA topics = _____
(See item number 3 of application guidelines)

Please describe how your organization would best benefit from this technical assistance.

_____

_____

Do you have any other technical assistance needs that we are not providing?:

_____

The Atlanta Women's Foundation will only provide support to organizations that demonstrate in their mission, policies and practices sensitivity and inclusivity to women of any race, class, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, national origin, ethnicity, or religious belief.

GIRLS TO WOMEN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER DESCRIPTIONS

The following technical assistance is available to your organization. You may select up to three providers in a calendar year. If you'd like more details about these providers, call Patsy White at the Atlanta Women's Foundation 404.577.5000.

1. Capacity Building

Organizations are born from the vision of committed people who want to make a difference. Sometimes visionaries do not have all the skills needed to help the organization thrive. Technical assistance is now available to help strengthen your organization and sustain it. Services include:

- Personnel management and volunteer coordination
- Strategic planning and board development
- Marketing and public outreach
- Program development, implementation and evaluation

Deborah Richardson, our specialist for capacity building, has over 22 years experience in non-profit management! She has served as the Executive Director for a number of local organizations including the YWCA Project FOCUS, the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, Capitol Area Mosaic and the National Black Arts Festival.

2. Computer Literacy and the Internet

Statistics show that even with increased access to computer technology, girls still lag behind boys in computer literacy skills. To ensure your organization and those you serve are able to use computers effectively, technical assistance is now available in the areas of:

- Computer literacy, education and training
- Computer lab setup and planning
- Computer literacy program support and assistance

Evelyn Young, of Computer Literacy Center has developed an innovative approach to adequately prepare individuals, groups and organizations for the information age via computer awareness and interaction. Computer Literacy Center is dedicated to empowering and educating teens, adults and seniors in using computer literacy to "turn technology barriers into bridges."

3. Entrepreneurship for Girls

Establishing an entrepreneurship program is extremely rewarding since the economic self-sufficiency of girls is one way to guarantee their long-range survival in an increasingly competitive world. This technical assistance is the best available and will include the following:

- Six sessions on implementation of an entrepreneurs' program
- Materials and instruments to implement the program
- On-going technical assistance
- Continued support through on-line discussions with other programs
- Program evaluation and assessment tools

Mary Ann Downey of Start-Up Education, a local youth entrepreneurship program, has provided training across the United States and Canada and is instrumental in providing technical assistance and training for numerous programs here in Atlanta.

4. Fund Raising and Resource Development

The key to an organization's long-range survival is a sound fundraising plan with the skills and resources in place to carry it out. Diversifying funding sources is also an important strategy. This technical assistance is available from two providers with different specialties:

- Foundations, corporations, and government grants, finding compatible funders
- Planning and organizing the grant writing process
- Understanding the proposal format and components
- Board development and training in fundraising
- Financial management, finding ways to earn or save money
- Fundraising research tools
- Sponsorship and marketing, courting corporate money

Sharon Groves of SDG Associates, a consulting firm, has raised more than $9,000,000 in grants for community organizations, with over 18 years of experience as a consultant, writer, and trainer. *Anne Sterchi's* was the Development Director for Rialto Theater and the Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee Account Director coordinating sponsor relations for the 1996 Games.

5. Gender Equity in Math and Science

Encouraging girls to pursue math and science when they are still discouraged from pursuing these arenas takes expertise and resources. You will be connected to existing resources that will teach you how to introduce the world of math and science to your girls through the following:

- Instructor training for science, math and technology curriculum
- Science, mathematics, and technology workshops for youth groups
- Assistance identifying key women in science and mathematics-related careers to participate in programming

Angelle Cooper, Director of Exhibits and Public Programs of SciTrek, will share her expertise with your program to open the field of math and science to girls. SciTrek, the Science and Technology Museum of Atlanta has provided programming for young people since 1988.

6. Mentoring

Adult guidance is an essential component for girls to develop into empowered women. Many organizations with mentoring programs, waste valuable, scarce resources trying to recruit, match and maintain a sagging pool of mentors. The following services will be provided:

- How to start and maintain a mentoring initiative
- Screening and liability for recruiting mentors
- Recruitment of mentors
- Documentation and supervision of mentors
- Basic training of mentors
- Child sexual abuse prevention training
- Documentation of outcome measurements

Kathy Davis, Assistant to the Vice President of Community Outreach and Education coordinates the training of your organization's staff, volunteers, and mentors. Big Brothers/Big Sisters has been the community leader in mentoring since 1960.

7. Rites of Passage

Rites of Passage programs address the developmental needs of African-American girls through culturally-specific activities and lessons that help them in their transition to womanhood. So many models exist, that selecting the best one can be resource consuming. You will receive customized Rites of Passage training and assistance in building your organization's capacity to deliver programming through the following services:

- Staff training in Rites of Passage
- Development of participant/parent/guardian advisory boards
- Curriculum application for your organization
- Documentation and evaluation
- Board development and training

Sheila Joyner Pritchard and Linda Boyd Taylor of Village Keepers, a consulting firm with over 20 years of experience, offer an array of culturally-based services that incorporate capacity building to strengthen your organization. Village Keepers has provided training, technical assistance and support to for-profit ventures, non-profit organizations and faith-based entities as well as federal, state and local government agencies.

8. Teen Sexuality/Postponing Parenthood

Finding a teen pregnancy prevention program that is progressive and effective is often a big hurdle for programs serving girls. Research has shown that comprehensive sex education that focuses on decision-making, problem-solving, and goal setting are effective. Therefore, technical assistance will provide the following:

- Clarification of organizational philosophy with regard to pregnancy prevention
- Program development using successful and effective strategies
- Communication tools for adolescent sexuality discussions
- Customized curriculum on pregnancy prevention and puberty

Lisa Medellin Young of Planned Parenthood of Georgia, will be available to your organization to provide strategies for working with the public education system, youth, community organizations, and parents. Planned Parenthood of Georgia has been providing sex education and training to adults and youth for over 30 years.

9. Violence Prevention

At very early ages, girls become the target of rape, incest, domestic violence, and sexual harassment as part of their community and school experiences. Strategies for working with girls and adults about these issues will be the focus of this technical assistance:

- Teaching girls how to recognize and avoid potentially violent situations
- Identifying peer and societal pressures toward sexual activity
- Introduction to domestic violence education
- Oppression and violence
- How to provide a safe place for girls who have been assaulted

Millicent Pierce, Founder of Count the Cost, provides violence prevention education to youth, parents, and community members through creative methods that emphasize self-responsibility and healthy decision making. Millicent uses her personal experiences as a powerful and effective teaching tool that provides examples for youth and adults.

Letta Neely
P.O. Box 1115
JP, MA
02130

ZAMI

P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, GA
30031

30031/2502

Nov 19, 1998

Hey Sistahs,

Finally, I am taking a moment to sit down + give thanks. My time in Atlanta was incredible. I feel so blessed to have been invited to such an important/necessary occassion. I hope that sistahs all over the country take notice at what OUT BIK QUEER women can do together. Y'all are powerful/awe-inspiring.

I have never been treated so well as an artist. Also, it makes such a difference performing for a out black organization. Suddenly on stage, I could feel communion to + with the messages rather than the slight panic, the necessary teaching + ~~[illegible]~~ resistance one must do in primarily anglo audiences. In other words, I could relax.

Please know that anything I can do to help Zami will be done. Let me know what y'all need. I will send a check for the scholarship fund as soon as I figure out what/~~[illegible]~~ shape my finances are in.

Please take care and keep me on (continue to) ur. mailing list —

yours in love
yours in the struggle,

. . .it is not our responsibility to
prove who we are. . .our job is to
. . . . . .BE. . . . . .

December 1, 1998

ZAMI, Inc.
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

Dear Sistahs of ZAMI, Inc.:

It is with GREAT appreciation that I extend to you this most warm and heartfelt THANK YOU! I thank the Goddess first and foremost for your presence in my life. Secondly, I thank each one of you for the difference you make and for all that you represent, spiritually and physically, on this journey of mine.

The weekend of October 23-25 has yet to be reckoned with, and I remain in awe of the power that existed and exists in women coming together. The multifaceted elements are still being digested by my soul being. I was moved. I am moved by what you have done and continue to do, Sistahs of ZAMI, Inc. And know that when you do what you do, it strengthens me to do what I do even more!

I am indeed grateful for the introduction to so many wonderful, talented and Goddess gifted Black Lesbians. I am MOST grateful for the inspiration sparked by such an untouchable event. There are some thangs that have yet to be definable through language as I know it, and ZAMI's Reclaiming Our Legacy: Celebrating Black Lesbian Scholarship is one of those thangs. My experience was beyond words, thoughts and feelings. . .it just is and will remain as such for a lifetime. Actually, it will continue beyond my lifetime, because I will speak to my sons and daughters of your courage and determination to be who you are FULLY, PERFECTLY and WHOLLY.

Once again, I say THANK YOU and GIVE THANKS for all that you have been, for all that you are and for all that you will be, Sistahs of ZAMI, Inc. I am here, at your service. So, whenever you need a sistah that will speak of your TRUTHS, just call on me. I'll be there.

Truly Yours,

Wanda Jeanne

THANK YOU

4. 24. 98 Fri

Dear Sisters,

Can't be there, but here's my $5.

Wish you well.

Please stay in touch

Shirlene

FORGET ME NOT

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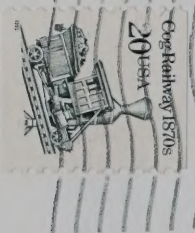

JANE

May 15, 1998

ZAMI Steering Committee:

Thank you very much for choosing me as one of the recipients of the 1998 Audre Lorde Scholarship! I look forward to returning to Atlanta in October for the awards ceremony. In the meantime, I can be reached at my VU home phone number and address if necessary.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Dana Hope

The Sisterist Twist

Lets twist again,
Like we did way back when!
Twist on a mountain, twist in the mist,
Do the sisterist twist!

JANE

From the power of Woman Series. TSTW

Sisterist: sis-ter-ist, adj: To be sisterist is to recognize and celebrate diversity among women, to work towards a common goal regardless of race, creed nationality or sexual preference, to disregard social structures which place women in groups that discommunicate them from each other. (Jane's new word!)

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April 7 1998

GALE P. JACKSON

Yami Sisters.

Dear Friend and Colleague,

A special note to invite you to invite me for a visit.

On publication of my new collection of poems, drawing as they do from a black woman's place in our history, I felt particularly called to bring this work of performance scholarship voice and story back to communities working within this legacy.

Late winter come spring I have been touring lecturing and reading; this time "on the road" richer for visits to old friends and communities of kinship.

Please write me, or e-mail my publisher Storm Imprints at StormImpri@aol.com, so we may set a date.

In Sisterhood

Gale P. Jackson.

Gale P. Jackson

Hoping to be visiting Spellman and that I might gather with sisters.

180 PROSPECT PARK WEST, BROOKLYN, NY 11215 718.768.1731

1619.
VIRGINIA.

This morning I steel my eyes open so horror can not seal them
the moon's face is the sky's womb threaded with a seabird's
sheep voice announcing land though this corpse vessel
eclipse the sun the dead child stares before and behind
and I watch my sister rock her baby in bloody empty arms pink
flesh on the bone her mouth a curse of mucus vomit and sperm
she scream her mind into the wind, the dawn, this land they call
"Virginia" I stare it down at the world's end where the sea
is a liar's calm I will outlive them if I must become stone I
will become stone and call myself Isabella I lick her lips I
whisper I feed her the seeds I have hidden, all this time,
under my tongue.

1691.
TITUBA OF SALEM.

In my mind's eye fields be burning bloody rags
and sunflowers blooming steel grey water they call ocean
marked with bloated bodies floating.
Blackbird caged in cold I nurse them. If you can serve
then you can poison.
Nimble fingers of a story. So by day they may enslave me
but by night I fly away.
My hens are fat. My house is warm. "Black arts!" they cry
and say I'll burn but I confess and will not hang.
What is a witch if not a woman blind to all except surviving.

Narrative Poems
Based on the Lives of African and African American
Women in the Early History of These New Black Nations

Bridge Suite

by Gale P. Jackson

STORM IMPRINTS is pleased to announce the publication of two new books by Gale P. Jackson

A KHOSIAN TALE OF BEGINNINGS AND ENDS

and

BRIDGE SUITE
NARRATIVE POEMS
BASED ON THE LIVES OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN
IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THESE NEW BLACK NATIONS

In the writer's winter come spring talks and readings.

Poet and teacher of poetry and history, librarian writer and student of "stories", Gale P. Jackson received a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship for her work in African American history in the Griot tradition and her fiction, essay and poetry are published widely in journals, catalogs, and anthologies. As a resident artist, and as an assistant professor on the faculty of Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York, she has spent the last twenty years teaching, lecturing, and performing, in workshops, readings, libraries, schools, university and community gatherings.

Her previous publications include: We Stand Our Ground (with the poets Kimiko Hahn and Susan Sherman); and coediting an anthology of South African and North American art and writings called Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom.

For scheduling, and information please contact Lisa Castle
StormImpri@aol.com
Or write to Gale Jackson c/o Storm Imprints180 Prospect Park West #6
Brooklyn, New York 11215

The Existentialist

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June 2000

The Existentialist

Newsletter of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta • Editor: Darlene Weathers
Art Editor: Cynthia R. Stallings • Page Layout: Rita M. Furman

470 Candler Park Drive, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307 • 404-378-5570 • E-mail: e-cong@mindspring.com
Gathered in 1976 • An Independent Congregation Affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association
R. Lanier Clance, Minister (404-373-3679) • Marsha Mitchiner, Associate Minister (404-355-8894)
• Edith Kelman, Congregational Administrator (404-378-5570)

Late Night Garage Sale: The Show — Everything Must Go
Nationally Renowned Performance Poets

June 2 & 3, 8:00 p.m.

The ADODI Muse presents its most ambitious work to date in the upcoming production, "Late Night Garage Sale: The Show (Everything Must Go)." The nationally renowned performance poets take on several issues, from the black gay community's late response to the AIDS epidemic, to codependent love relationships, to gay bashing in the church. And it's all for sale. With a set reflecting an actual garage sale, ADODI Muse employs symbolism and irony as they "sell off" all the oppression, confusion and denial they can drag out of the basements – and closets – in the community. Primarily poets, the Muse play on the hodgepodge atmosphere of a yard sale by mixing slam-style spoken word art, songs and even rap with their more traditional writing styles.

Tickets are $10.00 in advance ($12.00 at the door), and are available at OutWrite Bookstore and Coffeehouse, Charis Books and More, and Brushstrokes. Student discount tickets are available exclusively through The ADODI Muse. This performance is a part of the Atlanta Pride 2000 Cultural Celebration. For more information, contact ADODI Muse, Inc. at 404-352-4211.

Malik Williams of ADODI Muse and Duncan Teague
Photo by Connie Cross

1st E Events (cont.)

Team Speed Scrabble to Benefit Charis Circle
Sunday, June 4th, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

The last time you played Scrabble, you won with "quetzal" on a double word score…50 points, the game was yours. Impressive…but can you do that in 90 seconds? With three teammates screaming in your ear? Word nerds, sharpen your pencils. It's bigger than bingo. It's meaner than Olympic ping-pong. It's Team Speed Scrabble!

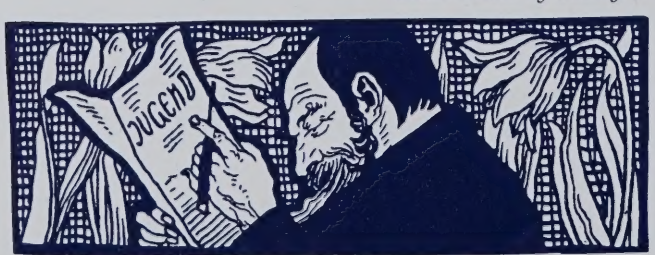
Sunday, June 4 at 3 pm, Team Speed Scrabble hits the First Existentialist Congregation. Twenty teams of four square off in a fast and furious tournament to benefit the Charis Circle. To register, call Charis at 404-524-0304. Registration is %40 for a team of four, and is limited to the first twenty teams. All teams must be pre-registered to play. (Cosponsored by First E)

Submitted by Lisa Kung

AFWC Benefit: Summer Song: A Cabaret
Saturday, June 10th, 8:00 p.m.

Come out and celebrate the arrival of summer in a music and fun-filled evening on Saturday, June 10th at the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta. The performance will benefit the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus. Performers will include the Chorus' own Robert Glor, Ellen Chase and Cheryl Hunter, as well as other local artists and chorus members. The benefit is made possible by the generosity of the First Existentialist, co-sponsor of the event, through the donation of performance space. Tickets can be obtained by contacting any Chorus member who can put you in contact with a member of the Host Committee for the event. Tickets are $10. Come and join the fun and usher in the summer with song.

Submitted by Holly Deal



Father's Day Celebration: A Poet and A Psychotherapist
Franklin Abbott and Frank Ostrowski
Sunday, June 18th

Our guest speakers on Father's Day, June 18, are Franklin Abbott and Frank Ostrowski, both long time friends of First E. Franklin is a poet and psychotherapist whose work includes the anthology, *Boyhood: Growing Up Male.* He was active in the early Radical Faerie Movement and is keenly interested in gay-centered spirituality. Frank is a retired psychotherapist, peace activist with Psychologists for Social Responsibility, father of two sons, recent grandfather, and long-age Father in the Roman Catholic Church. We welcome their insight, sensitivity, humor and delightfully different energies.

Submitted by Sharon Mathis

Existential Discussion with Lanier Clance
Challenges of Living
Wednesday, June 21st 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Our monthly Existential Discussion is set for Wednesday June 2l, 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The themes include various challenges of living: goodness, truth, relationships, love, being in a community, etc. Attendance over the past several months has ranged from six to twenty-one persons. Many of us leave the discussion with the experience of having created an intimate, compassionate evening for ourselves. We share ideas, feelings and experiences with each other. I invite you to join our event this month. Our group is open to members and friends.

Submitted by Lanier Clance

Showing Our Pride
Sunday, June 25th

We're looking for a few good women/men/kids to be a part of the First E contingent in the GLBT Pride March on Sunday, June 25th. We need someone with a pickup truck to be our "float" and offer a chance for walkers to take a break and ride. If you can provide the pickup and/or would like to otherwise participate, call Marsha at 404-355-8894.

Submitted by Marsha Mitchiner

Community Events

Congratulations to Bonnie Gramlich on Her Retirement from Delta!!!

Happy June Birthdays!!!

Roxanne Caspary 6/19, Delan Curran 6/18, Gareth Fenley 6/23, Isabel Gilbert 6/18, Valerie Gilbert 6/5, Mark Gramlich 6/26, Dwight Lyman 6/26, Nan MacMahon 6/12, Bridgett McNew 6/14, Dace Park 6/22, Quinn 6/10, Susan Rawlston 6/9, Greg Rose 6/28, Halley Ross 6/30, Marsha Springs 6/17, Carol Stewart 6/30, Nancy VanDyke 6/29, DeDe Vogt 6/16, Pat Wells 6/5.

Welcome New Members

Our warmest welcome to year 2000 new members Julie Fabb, Susan Reu, Alice Tinkley, Laura F. Willard, Amy Wirth and Ann-Marie Yap.

Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Terry Allen upon the passing of his father.

June Exhibiting Artist: Judith Simmons

Judith Simmons' mixed media works will grace our Sanctuary Gallery beginning the second part of June. Judith has a degree in painting from Birmingham-Southern College and work toward a post-grad degree in printmaking from Florida State University. She offers, "My paintings are concerned with what I know best: my interior world and what happens when, reluctantly and inevitably, my world collides with the world at large. I grew up in rural Alabama, and after a long cleansing rebellious period, moved to the big city and have spent the last 20 or so years working in a Fortune 500 company in a field for which my fourth-grade teacher said I had no aptitude. Even though much later, to my chagrin, her comments proved to have been prophetic, I would just like to take this opportunity to say, 'Ha! Ha! So there, Mrs. Stutts!' As you can imagine, worlds are colliding left and right." "My work is mixed media which combines acrylics and collaged materials, consisting of relevant news headlines which amuse me and portions of my own etchings and collagraphs. By the time this show goes up, I will have retired from the above-mentioned job and will be heavy into my first weeks of freedom. Hoorah!"

Rebecca Ranson's World Premier Play *A Glorietta* at 7 Stages Theatre

First E Discount Night Thursday June 8 at 7:30 pm- our tix $10

Rebecca will present a Special Reading from the play at our June 4 Sunday Celebration.

Rebecca's background on the play: "While doing an interview project for the *Arts in Atlanta Project* in 1993, several of the people interviewed mentioned an unsolved murder that had taken place in Kirkwood. I could see the building where the murder had happened from an upstairs back window in my house. I knew the victim's name was Walter and from the descriptions of Walter being 'different, peculiar, odd, and having been to California,' I realized that he had most likely been a gay man. Walter's death became a fascination for me. Being a writer, not a criminal investigator, I had no interest in solving the crime but I began to daydream the possible circumstances of his death. Whenever I daydreamed, a gentle image came, an image of passion between two men. And the image was at once beautiful and filled with anguish. And I wanted it to be written. The impetus to explore the image became real when I needed a 10-minute play for *Six From the Rainbow* and the first part of the play became words.

The building where Walter had died was a church when I moved to Kirkwood and I could hear singing and preaching on Sunday mornings drifting in my open window. After Walter became real to me, I wondered if Walter's spirit was there and if he received balm for his anguish in those passionate, uplifted voices. After a few years the church moved and the building stood empty. Somewhere in that emptiness, a joining of two gay men, a wedding, took place and part three of the play emerged.

What began as a play about Walter became a three-part play about what happened on that particular piece of land and what was buried beneath that earth and in the air around it, what was held, what was dispersed. Every play that I have written comes from something that won't leave me alone, usually something based in absolute reality. This play comes from images and sounds, a red bow tie on an elderly black man, a whispering wind, a voice raised in praise of God, a lost lover crying in the dark."

Submitted by Rebecca Ranson

Community Events (cont.)

Youth Pride Holds Fundraiser for New Space

Youth Pride, Atlanta is excited to announce we will be moving! Youth Pride (YP) is an organization serving the needs of Atlanta's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth ages 13-24. YP has seen tremendous growth during its two-year tenure at its present space at the corner of Oakdale and McLendon Ave. Due to the growing needs of the community, YP will be moving to a new site... a site FOUR times the size of our current space.

The youth of YP have several wishes for the new space. One wish is to have an expanded recreational area with a pool table. To realize this dream, with the help of 1st E, the youth have put together a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser, cosponsored by First E. During the event you will be entertained by the creative and talented youth and served some of the best spaghetti you've ever tasted. There is always one special ingredient in our sauce: LOVE.

Please come and help the GLBT youth of Atlanta achieve their dream of a pool table. We hope to see you on Saturday, June 17th at 5:30 pm at the First Existentialist Congregation.

Submitted by John Badger

Mountain Retreat Scholarships Available

The ECong annual retreat will take place next fall at The Mountain Camp and Conference Center in Highlands, North Carolina, Oct. 27 through 29, 2000. I received a letter regarding scholarship availability through the Mountain and the Unitarian-Universalist Assoc. To apply: write Larry Wheeler (to his attention) at the Mountain. In the letter specify the actual dollar amount you need. Larry will then contact you. It is important to specify a dollar amount for Larry to work with. The fees for adults will range from $124.00 to $146.00 for adults and $65.00 for youths 12-17, children $25.00 4- 11 yrs and 0 to 3 years no charge. The Mountain strongly urges anyone who would like to attend to please, please apply. The more the merrier!

Peace be... Joanie Kimble, Retreat Co-Coordinator.

Scholarships for Lesbians of African Descent ZAMI, INC.

Atlanta's Premiere African-American Lesbian Collective

AUDRE LORDE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

PURPOSE OF AWARDS: The Audre Lorde Scholarship Awards are designed to recognize out* lesbians of African descent who are making significant contributions to their communities. ZAMI wants to support and encourage their continuing education by providing scholarships to those women enrolled in accredited technical, undergraduate and graduate programs.

ELIGIBILITY: An out lesbian of African descent who is a graduating high school senior or currently attending any technical, undergraduate or graduate school located in the following states: Alabama , Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia Cumulative high school/ college/or technical school grade point average of 2.5 or higher. Accepted or registered at a post-secondary educational institution for full or part-time attendance as defined by the institution. Lesbians 40 years plus are strongly encouraged to apply.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: Submit official academic transcript; completed scholarship application form; a two-three page typed statement of purpose; two letters of recommendations from a teacher, mentor, employer or activist/ organizer in the lesbian/gay community; a photo (head shot) any size, black/ white or color, which may be used at the announcement of the award. AWARDS: 10 awards for $1000 scholarship each.

Out* is defined as an acknowledgement of lesbian identify to self, and or to family, friends, and community.

Thanks to Rita Furman, of Rita's Manuscript Finishing, 404/525-5712, for donation of her time to do the desktop publishing of the First E. newsletter. She also does all kinds of word processing, specializing in foreign language work. Discount for student work.

Reflections by Lanier Clance

This has been one of the most beautiful springs in Atlanta for me. The azaleas, the various blooming trees and shrubs, the birds returning with songs, all seem more vibrant and vivid than ever before. The cooler weather has allowed me to be outside longer than usual.

For a few years after I no longer had the stamina to work in our home yard, I was phobic about even going out in the yard. Looking out into the garden, I would feel such sadness and some anger because I could no longer plant and move stones around. Over the years being outside trimming, planting and just moving things around were experiences that calmed my spirit and stimulated my mind. I could get lost in feeling all the growth and vitality around me.

I am as yet unable to spend much time in the garden. However, I was able to replace a birdfeeder that had fallen in a windstorm several years ago. I have enjoyed checking and refilling the feeder. I have also enjoyed the return of so many birds to the feeder. In spite of having a difficult March and April, a part of me feels more alive.

Another manifestation of aliveness has been the enjoyment of our Sunday Celebrations. While attendance has been extremely low this spring, I have enjoyed immensely the persons who are present and attending our services, and all the work by our Sunday Programs Guild and the musicians.

The paradox that I can feel so alive and still feel intensely frustrated with my physical limitations is confusing to me. To feel so alive in my spirit and mind, yet so aware of the fragility of my health is a daily experience that I have no words to explain. Actually, since returning from Florence, Italy, last spring, I have felt better over all this year in my body, mind, and spirit than in previous years. (I have also had some terrifying times this year with my health, which makes my words seem so incongruent).

I have made choices over and over in my life to be committed to freedom, to be engaged, to be compassionate, to be an intellectual, to create, sustain, and maintain an existential community. I have often succeeded, and as often failed in my commitments; however, I remain engaged. Something I have that I never expected in my wildest dreams is that I am happy and joyful most of the time. When I am in deepest despair and terror about my health, I know I have lived and I am alive.

Treasurer's Report
for April 2000

Cash Flow. April operating income was $6,342 and operating expenses were $9,492, so we had a negative monthly cash flow of $3,150. Year-to-date through April, operating income is $35,780 and expenses are $34,514 for a positive cash flow of $1,266. Our checking account balance at the end of April was $7,296...enough for about three weeks of operating expenses. This is too marginal, folks.

Budget Status. On the bright side, we have at least been able to pay our mortgage and all other bills each month so far this year and our year-to-date cash flow is still in the black. On the darker side, our monthly income in April was the lowest so far this year, we continue being in a precarious financial situation, and the "summer slump" approaches. We will be mailing six-month pledge statements at the end of June. Please review your personal contribution status for the year and act accordingly. Also, if you are willing to assist with a summer benefit or fund raising activity, please contact me or any other Board member or one of our ministers. Many thanks.

Regards & Love.....Bill Read, E.T.

Thanks to All for Spirited Gifts of Time in May

We are thankful to have so many talented, creative and hardworking members and friends so generous in giving of themselves…

- Our special thanks to Dr. Josephine Bowens Lewis and Nat Martin for their special presentations on Mother's Day at our May Sunday Celebration.
- Thanks to all contributors to our Sunday Celebrations: Scott Hooker, Marsha Mitchiner, Pat Creasman, Roger Presley, Janna Nelson, Jean Heinrich, and all others.
- Thanks to Glenda Corwin for coordinating the wonderful May Sunday Programs.
- June Sunday Programs Coordinator is Sharon Mathis.
- Thanks to Maurice Petty Clifford for his transformative artworks that energized our Sanctuary in May.
- In June we welcome the multimedia artworks of Judith Simmons to our Sanctuary gallery.
- Thanks so much to Pat Hewatt for organizing the Existential T-Shirt Sale to benefit First E's general operating budget.

We Count on Our Unseen Counters

Each week one of the following persons gives about an hour of personal time to count our Sunday offering, copy our checks, and deposit the offering to BOND Credit Union. As well as time, this takes special attention and committed caring for our Congregation. We extend our deep appreciation to Sheryll Dahlke, Jo Hamby, Bill Read, and Kitty Wimbish for their dedication to this essential task. If you are interested in helping with this process, please contact our office or Treasurer Bill Read.

*Image by **Judith Simmons**, latter June artist in our Sanctuary*

June Celebrations of Life

June 4 "The Second Guide Line to Creative Relations"

Speaker: Lanier Clance
Special Reading: Rebecca Ranson
Accompaniment: Roger Presley

June 11 "If I Had _____?"

Speaker: Lanier Clance
Special Reading: Pat Creasman
Accompaniment: Scott Hooker

June 18 "On Fathering and Being Fathered"

Speakers: Franklin Abbott and Frank Ostrowski
Special Reading: Mia Jamison
Accompaniment: Scott Hooker

June 25 GBLT Pride Weekend

Speaker (mini-talk) and other surprises: Lanier Clance
Assistant: Sharon Mathis
Accompaniment: Scott Hooker

June Programs Coordinator is Sharon Mathis.

First E June Congregational Calendar

Friday 2 **ADODI Muse**: *Late Night Garage Sale:The Show* 8pm. Tix: $10 advance, $12 door; Cosponsored by First E

Sat 3 **ADODI Muse**: *Late Night Garage Sale:The Show* 8pm; Tix $10, $12

Sun 4 Celebration of Life 11am
Team Speed Scrabble Charis Circle Benefit 3 pm – 6 pm. Cosponsored by First E

Tues 6 Board Meeting; 7:30 pm - Downstairs

Thurs 8 ***A Glorietta*** by **Rebecca Ranson** at 7 Stages Theatre, 7:30 pm. First E Discount night - $10 Tix - A world premier

Friday 9 Charis *New Book Signing*: **Felice Newman**

Sat 10 **Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus Benefit:** *Summer Song: A Cabaret.* 8 pm - Tix $10; Cosponsored by First E

Sun 11 Celebration of Life 11am
July newsletter deadline

Wed 14 **Existential Discussion** with Lanier Clance 7 to 8:30 pm. ***Challenges of Living***

Sat 17 **YouthPride** New Space ***Benefit Spaghetti Dinner & Show.*** 5:30 - 8:30 pm
Tix $10, Youth & Students $5; Cosponsored by First E

Sun 18 Celebration of Life 11am

Tues 20 **BiNature Meeting** 7 to 9 pm

Sun 25 Celebration of Life 11 am
GLBT Pride Parade - for details Marsha Mitchiner

June Sanctuary Art Exhibitions by Maurice Petty Clifford and Judith Simmons

"The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It stands at the threshold of true art and true science."

Albert Einstein

The Existentialist

470 Candler Park Drive, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30307
(404) 378-5570

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Decatur GA 30031.

30031/2502

SOUTHERNERS ON NEW GROUND

BUILDING ALLIES ▪ CONNECTING RACE, CLASS, GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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Co-Directors
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Louisville, KY 40201
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fax (502) 896-0577
SONG4Pam@aol.com

Craig Washington
1447 Peachtree Street NE
Suite 1004
Atlanta, GA 30309
(404) 249-8788
fax (404) 249-1451
SONG4CW@aol.com

Founders
Mandy Carter
Joan P. Garner
Pat Hussain
Pam McMichael
Suzanne Pharr
Mab Segrest

August 23, 1999

Dear Friends,

We are writing to invite 2-3 people from your organization to a special gathering of lesbigaytrans organizers and artists/cultural workers who seek to connect issues and people and use the arts in their organizing work. On October 8-10, wrapped around The *MountainTop Festival, The Third Multi-Cultural Celebration of Appalachian Lesbigaytrans Culture,* SONG is convening a group to look at the connection of issues, with a particular focus on race.

We will gather in the hills of east Tennessee at the Highlander Education and Research Center. Our work will include education and analysis about racism and the role of race in this country and our social change work. Then we will break into small groups and work on artistic and cultural tools we can use in our local communities to deepen the understanding of race in our organizations and constituencies.

We ask that you arrive Thursday evening, October 7, so we can begin work just after breakfast Friday morning, October 8. You will be greeted by someone who shows you around and gets you settled in. There will be no meal provided at the Highlander that Thursday night as arrivals times will vary. We ask that you have your evening meal before you get there.

The schedule and basic agenda look like this:

Thursday Oct 7	Arrival anytime in the evening Walk, talk, meet, watch videos, hang out
Friday Oct 8	<u>Workshop -</u> Morning - A Question of Race with active participation and group exercises Afternoon - A Question of Race (cont) Small Group Work to start planning *tools and actions in local communities* Evening - Pre-festival jam session
Saturday Oct 9	Morning - Small Group Work completed Afternoon and Evening - The MountainTop Festival (see enclosed)
Sunday Oct 10	Morning - Small Group Report Back Presentations Wrap Up and Evaluations

We chose this day to celebrate the MountainTop Festival because it is Coming Out Day. We realize it may conflict with a Coming Out Day event in your home community and hope that a couple of people from your group can also celebrate with us in a multi-cultural gathering in Appalachia. We think it you'll love it and it will benefit your work.

The cost of the workshop for 3 nights lodging and Fri-Sun meals is $109 per person. We hope that the organization you represent can cover that cost or that it is possible to do some fundraising in your local area. If not please don't let that be the reason you don't come. Talk to us first.

If flying, you should come into the Knoxville, TN airport. There is shuttle service available from the airport or we may be able to arrange transportation to the center.

Highlander anytime of the year is a politically significant and geographically beautiful place to be. In October it will be even more spectacular. Come join this unique gathering and let's learn together to develop tools that will move us forward on critical issues that frame our activism and relationships with each other.

Looking forward to seeing you in October,

Pam

Pam McMichael
Co-Director

Craig

Craig Washington
Co-Director

P.S. IMPORTANT NOTE!

Pam is out of the office Sept 1 - 27.
Craig is out of the office Sept 16 - Oct 1.
Your contacts to register for this event are **Diane Moten** or **Becki Winchel** in the Louisville office.
You may register by mail, e-mail, or fax.
Any scholarship request must be discussed with them.

If you receive a travel scholarship that involves flying, you must have registered by September 22 to access a 14 day deadline to assure affordable flights.

Contact information: 502/896-2070
Fax: 502/896-0577
E-mail: SONG4Di@aol.com or SONG4Beck@aol.com
Mail: PO Box 3912, Louisville, KY 40201

Saturday, October 9, 1999

1PM — 8PM

Mountaintop Festival

THE THIRD ANNUAL MULTI-CULTURAL CELEBRATION OF THE MANY FACES OF APPALACHIAN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER CULTURE

HIGHLANDER CENTER
NEW MARKET, TN

TICKETS SOLD AT GATE
$8.00 – 12.00 SLIDING SCALE

COST INCLUDES EVENING MEAL:
A TRADITIONAL APPALACHIAN SUPPER

WHAT TO BRING — PICNIC BASKET, BLANKET OR LAWN CHAIR, POETRY, SONGS, PAINT BRUSHES, STORIES...

Exciting Performances

and

Participatory Art Making Workshops

Everybody has a story to tell, a song to sing, and images of our memories. This festival gives us the opportunity to enjoy exciting performances, and make our own art. Join us as we lift up each other, same gender lovin' mountain-folk, affirming that who we are is beautiful. The songs of our grandmothers, stories of our fathers, the laughter of our children , and tender kisses between lovers – this is the land we stand on as we proudly sing together fighting in solidarity for justice.

SPONSORED BY:
SOUTHERNERS ON NEW GROUND, HIGHLANDER CENTER, KENTUCKY FAIRNESS ALLIANCE, RANDOM PRODUCTIONS

FUNDED BY:
THE APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY FUND

FOR MORE INFORMATION, TO VOLUNTEER OR ARRANGE WORK EXCHANGE CALL
423-933 - 3443

SONG Cultural Worker Retreat -
Art and Social Change:
Connecting Issues, w/Particular Focus on Race

Highlander Center
October 8-10, 1999
arrive evening of Oct 7th

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home # _____ Work # _____

Fax # _____ E-mail _____

Organization _____

I am interested in this retreat because _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Yes, I want to come to this workshop and my orgnization or I can *pay full costs plus my own travel.*

_____ *Yes, I want to come to this workshop and want to talk with you about scholarship assistance, either travel or registration.*

_____ *Yes, I want to come to this workshop and want to talk with you about a full scholarship.*

502/896-2070 fax 502/896-0577 SONG4Di@aol.com or SONG4Beck@aol.com

HORIZON
THEATRE COMPANY
PO Box 5376 Atlanta, GA 31107

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SOCIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR
ZAMI
P.O. BOX 2502
DECATUR, GA 30031

Horizon cordially invites you to...

HORIZON

THEATRE COMPANY

cordially invites you to the opening night performances of the New South for the New Century Play Festival:

THE ALGAE EATERS

A mysterious love story about the cycles of life.
by Steve Murray

FRIDAY, JUNE 4 AT 8:00 P.M.

UNCLE BENDS: A HOME-COOKED NEGRO NARRATIVE

A hearty serving of power, passion and rice and beans.
by Bob Devin Jones

FRIDAY, JUNE 11 AT 8:00 P.M.

RSVP by Wednesday, June 2 for The Algae Eaters and by Wednesday, June 9 for Uncle Bends.

(404) 584-7450

Seating is limited

Horizon Theatre Company is located at the corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues in Little Five Points

Some people have a problem with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. It's time to send them a clear message. We're out here. We've got the right to be who we are and the right to fight for it. We've also got the right to vote to protect our interests. **GO TO WWW.OUTVOTE2000.ORG TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE OUT HERE.**

VOTE

WWW.OUTVOTE2000.ORG

NOVEMBER 7TH

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MAKE SURE THEY KNOW WE'RE OUT HERE

those who have fallen for who they were can live through the actions of those who are not afraid

Matthew Shepard, Arthur "JR" Warren, Brandon Teena, and Tyra Hunter can't vote. But we can. We can pay tribute to their memory by remembering the power each of us has to change the future. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people—and their friends and families—can use the power of their vote to win a place in society that is equal to everyone. Visit www.outvote2000.org to learn about how we can make a difference not just for the fallen, but for those who carry on to fulfill their dreams.

vote on november 7th

come out and into the voting booth

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those who

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OFFICE OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER EQUITY

2105 Computer & Space Sciences Bldg.
College Park, Maryland 20742-2465
301.405.8721 TEL 301.405.8722 FAX

May 25, 2000

Mary Anne Adams
ZAMI, Inc.
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

Dear Ms. Adams:

I have recently been named Chair of the newly created LGBT Issues Task Force advising the University System of Maryland Diversity Network. Within the System we have three Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs), Bowie State University, Coppin State University, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The Director of the Institute for Diversity and Multi-cultural Affairs at Bowie State University, Dr. Zola Boone, has asked our Task Force to consider the special needs of HBCUs regarding their LGBT populations. As a part of our strategy, we have decided to try and help foster conversations and connections involving interested persons at our HBCUs with individuals who have experience working with non-heterosexual people at other HBCUs. I would like to enlist your help in identifying such individuals.

Ideally, these persons would have had the specific assignment to work with these populations as a regular part of their assigned duties; but I fear that may restrict us too much. Indeed, none of my colleagues within the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education could identify such an individual. Are there any you could name? Perhaps you could identify people who have been employed at an HBCU and have worked to create an open and supportive campus climate for non-heterosexual persons.

I would greatly appreciate any guidance you could give me. Feel free to contact me by telephone, fax, email (ljensen@deans.umd.edu), or any other means you find appropriate. I thank you in advance for any advice you may give.

Sincerely,

Luke Jensen, Ph.D.
Director

LJ:

SHERRY L. TURNER, PH.D.
NIA-ANASI OKYEREMA BA

August 5, 2000

Mary Anne Adams
Executive Director
ZAMI, Inc.
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

Dear Mary Anne:

What a pleasure it is to be able to support Zami's efforts to promote scholarship and excellence among lesbians of African descent. During the past three years, I have come to admire the legacy that Zami and its leaders are leaving to the greater Atlanta area and to the African American lesbian community. The previous Audre Lorde Scholarship recipients have been impressive young women who have demonstrated incredible potential as scholars, activists, artists, and leaders. I am delighted to be able to support these and other young women who exemplify Audre Lorde's courage and spirit.

Enclosed is my $1000 contribution to the Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund. I look forward to supporting Zami's work in the future.

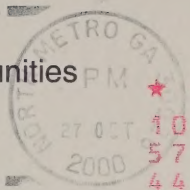
Sincerely,

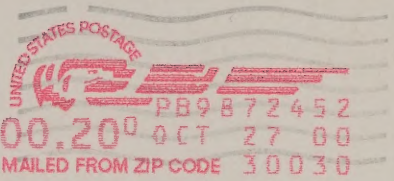
Sherry L. Turner

Sherry L. Turner, Ph.D.

32 KENDRICK PLACE • AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS • 01002
PHONE: (413) 253-9583 • E-MAIL: STURNER@MTHOLYOKE.EDU

Fund for Southern Communities
4285-G Memorial Drive
Decatur, GA 30032





ZAMI
PO Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031

30031+2502

Printed on recycled paper

Date: 10/26/00

Your application for funding has been received at the Fund for Southern Communities.

☑ It is complete and is being processed for review.

☐ It is incomplete, but may be included in this cycle if you can immediately submit the following information:

Mary Anne: I do, however, need to get some revision on your budget. Please give me a call. Jack

You should hear final results by: 1/31/01

If you have any questions, please call (404) 292-7600. Jack

NAESM, Inc
2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Suite 602
Atlanta, GA 30310

We Love You, Love Yourself, BE SAFE...

ATLANTA GA 303
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25 OCT
2000

Zami
Post Office Box 2502
Decatur, Georgia 30331

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NATIONAL AIDS EDUCATION & SERVICES FOR MINORITIES
2001 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Suite 602 Atlanta, Georgia 30310
Office 404.753.2900 Fax 404.752.9610 E-mail: aesm@mindspring.com

October 23, 2000

Zami
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, Georgia 30031

Dear Zami

My name is Jala Waleed I am the Support Service Coordinator for AIDS Education and Services for Minorities. AESM was established ten years ago by three individual who helped African-American men who had AIDS. They cleaned their homes, cooked meals and provided some medical support.
We are now twenty staffs strong and offer the following:

- Transitional Housing
- Food Pantry
- Clothing Closet
- Support Group
- Peer Counseling
- Education/Risk Reduction
- Case Management
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Mental Health Counseling

AESM is in need of employees and volunteers. Our organization has the following halftime job openings: Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor. We also have slots for volunteers in the following categories: housing monitor, office worker and maintenance. I hope your organization would like to contribute eight hours or more a month to AESM. Please contact me at (404) 753-2900 ext. 17.

Sincerely,

Jala Waleed

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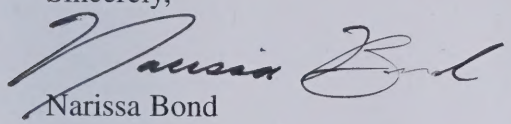
5th District, GA

December 2, 2000

Dear Zami Board,

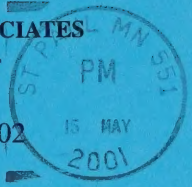
My name is Narissa Bond. I am a performing songwriter from Virginia. I heard about your organization through Mary Anne Adams. I hear your organization is doing some great things in Atlanta. I would like to be considered for one of your activities. Enclosed are my promo materials and two recordings; my latest CD and a tape with some of my more recent live recordings. I hope we can work together in the near future. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Narissa Bond

HARTNETT & ASSOCIATES
6 WEST FIFTH STREET
SUITE 700
SAINT PAUL, MN 55102



Mary Anne Adams
ZAMI, Inc.
PO Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30030

HARTNETT & ASSOCIATES

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AND ARTEMIS MRI

have *MOVED!*

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Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

contact info: Phone: 651-223-2875
Fax: 651-223-2876
e-mail: cbhartnett@earthlink.net

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
FOR GREATER ATLANTA, INC.
50 Hurt Plaza, Suite 449
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
www.atlcf.org

Learn more about our program initiatives and new funding opportunities for 2001-2002 at two events on June 14, 2001:

- **Unrestricted Grants Workshop**
  9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- **New Program & Funding Opportunities**
  2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

NEW INFO!

Loudermilk Center for the Regional Community
Oz Nelson Ballroom
40 Courtland Street
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-507-1694

Free. RSVP to Vilma Weekes at 404-688-5525 or e-mail grants@atlcf.org by **June 7, 2001**. Seating is limited.

Ms. Mary Anne Adams
ZAMI
PO Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30030

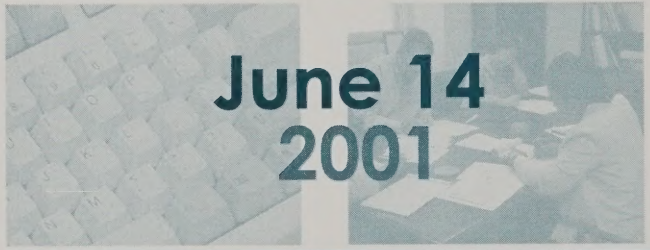
THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
FOR GREATER ATLANTA, INC.

NEW!

Program & Funding Opportunities

for 2001-2002

arts & culture
civic affairs



June 14 2001

community development
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health
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JOIN US & GET ALL THE NEW INFORMATION!

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350 SPELMAN LANE, SW
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314-4399
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EXTENSION 404-223-7573

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY

July 7, 2001

To: Zami Inc.
Re: Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund

I have been asked to write a letter detailing my impressions of Ms. Spencer Hope Dennis. I have known Ms. Dennis since August of 2000. She has been an instructor in the Sociology department here at Spelman College since the spring of this year. In the upcoming year she will be a full time instructor.

It has been my experience with Ms. Dennis that she is a highly conscientious, socially conscious individual. I have been constantly amazed at the dedication she displays as an educator. She was initially hired in a part time capacity. Typically, part time instructors do not engage themselves with the departments or with the students beyond a cursory level. Ms. Dennis was not such an instructor. She spent a great deal of time on campus and made herself available to students sometimes more so than full time faculty. This in addition to her dedication to scholarly activity and education impressed me to no end.

I understand that Ms. Dennis is applying for a scholarship granted to out black lesbians. I would like to relay that one of my first conversations with Ms. Dennis was about her sexuality and how she was committed to bringing it into the classroom. I can say that in the many years that I have been at Spelman, I have not experienced a woman so open, so conscious and so willing to advance understanding and tolerance through self-exposure. She never hesitated to bring important issues of sexuality to the classroom. I have heard nothing but good things about her teaching style and students seem to be enthusiastic about her return for the fall.

Ms. Dennis is an exceptional woman, scholar, and representative for the lesbian community. She has been hired in a full time capacity at Spelman, and I hope that there will be many years to come where she will grace us with her intellect, her passion, and her vision. I give her my highest recommendation and I hope that you consider her as one of your top candidates for your award.

Daryl White
Chair
Sociology and Anthropology Department
Spelman College
Giles Hall 312

September 29, 2001

ZAMI, Inc
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, GA 30031
(404) 370-0920
Zami@zami.org

In the Life Atlanta would like thank ZAMI, Inc. for all of there good works and continued dedication to the community. We congratulate you on this your fifth year of ZAMI's Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund and make a pledge of $250 to fund.

We will mail our donation via check to be mailed to the organization at, ZAMI, Inc P.O. Box 2502 Decatur, GA 30031.

Sincerely,

In The Life Atlanta
Board of Directors

Sharon Hodnett

Board member

Telephone: 404-872-6410
P O BOX 7206
ATLANTA, GA 30357-0206
http://www.inthelifeatl.com

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7 STAGES

You don't just "see" a show at 7 Stages, you experience it. Come early and warm to a steaming cappuccino, or cool down to a blissful glass of wine in the breezy cafe patio. Have your mind blown in the eclectic gallery, with everchanging exhibits. Relax afterwards in the cafe with the cast and a beer for a thoughtful discussion of the play. Most importantly, experience a thrilling jolt at our head-spinning, mind-boggling, nowhere-else-in-Atlanta theatre.

5237647 USE YOUR IMAGINATION 7 STAGES

See, you may not have heard of some of the plays we do, but we're out to challenge, provoke and inspire discussion. We're not telling you what to think, we're just presenting questions in a way that no one else does in Atlanta. You will leave the theatre inspired, thrilled, or downright blown away, and we dare you not to talk about it the next day.

2000-2001 Season

Sept 30 - Nov 5
previews Sept 27-29

In Berlin
By Jim Grimsley
Directed by Anders Cato

Take a sensual journey to the exotic side of Europe as a gay, Southern man, frustrated with his static life, finds his religious roots challenged as he becomes mesmerized by the passion and hunger of S&M. This haunting thriller is by the author of *Dream Boy*, 1998's riveting hit.

SPECIAL EVENT
Nov 10 - 11

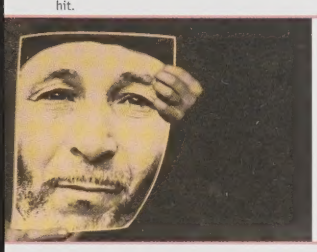
San Francisco Mime Troupe
Co-presented by Alternate Roots

This renowned company (a Tony winner for excellence in regional theatre) is recognized for hysterical performances on controversial subjects. Their *City for Sale* is a musical satire on the gentrification of neighborhoods and urban displacement. (7 Stages Passports are only valid on Nov. 10)

SPECIAL EVENT
Nov. 14-18

Gateway Performance Theatre

This acclaimed company travels the world with their renowned shows using stunning movement and breathtaking masks. Spectacular discoveries for adults and children alike.
Special showtimes:
10:00 AM Tues.-Sat. 4:30 Tues. & Wed.
1:00 Sat.



SPECIAL EVENT
Nov. 16-26

Hot Flashes, Power Surges and Private Summers
written & performed by Rhodessa Jones

Jones brings to 7 Stages her multi-media mixture of wild wit, comedic repartee, and seasoned sexuality spiced with 50 years of social observation. It's a look at womanhood, through the eyes of a born-again crone.

Feb. 3-25
previews Jan. 31-Feb. 2

Sweat
Written and Directed by Walter Chakela

Blazing African drumbeats and sizzling song fill the story of fiery villagers in South Africa fighting in Apartheid. These personal stories and songs will sear with the soulful passion of ordinary people trying to live peaceful lives against the crushing will of oppression.

Mar. 2-25

B.L.A.C.K. (Better Left A Colored Kid)
By Freddie Hendricks Youth Ensemble of Atlanta

Dynamic, explosive and pounding, YEA's 50 African American teenage members write and perform their own musicals dealing with urban issues facing today's teens. These soaring, inspiring performances are for adults as well as children.

April 14-May 6
previews April 11-13

Black Battles with Dogs
By Bernard-Maria Koltes

To a misty bridge in the African jungle comes a mysterious man to pick up his brother's body. Racial tensions ignite when the body cannot be found. Arthur Nauzyciel, a hot, young French director, guides Atlanta actors through the mythical terrains of Koltes, France's most respected contemporary playwright.

SPECIAL EVENT
May 10-13

Preaching to the Perverted
written & performed by Holly Hughes

Hughes, notorious as one of the NEA Four who appeared before the Supreme Court to challenge Congess's ban on funding for "obscene" works, creates a lyrical, scathing and hilarious look at her appearance before the nine justices. Sit down at her wild tea party!

passport program

Become a 7 Stages Passport Subscriber!
Our unique season subscription—flexible & inexpensive

How does it work?

- buy your Passport for $35 ($20 for students & seniors)
- make reservations for a show
- come to the box office on the night of the show and pay $5 for your ticket.

What's the advantage?

- $5 admission for all 7 Stages shows
- $5 admission to opening nights (limited passport seats available)
- $5 admission to most performances by other theatre companies at 7 Stages.
- 1/2 price admission to special events.
- flexible choice for when to see a show
- special invitations /offers
- 7 Stages quarterly calendar & newsletter
- free parking

How can I support 7 Stages?

When you purchase your Passport, please consider making an additional contribution to 7 Stages. In this way, you can help pay our artists' salaries and other production expenses which are not completely covered by ticket sales. Just check the "donation" area on the Passport order form and indicate the amount.

3 options

Passport $35

Pay only $5 admission for all 7 Stages productions. In addition, for only $5 per show, you can see numerous other theatre companies performing at 7 Stages. Plus, you receive discount tickets for all 7 Stages special events.

1st Class Passport $100

All passport benefits, except admission is FREE for 7 Stages regular productions.

Student/Senior Passport $20

Enjoy the same benefits of a regular passport, except students and seniors pay $20 for their passports.

passport order form

Name E-Mail Address

Address

City State Zip

Telephone (Day) (Night)

Payment: Check | Cash | AMEX | VISA | Master Card

Card No. Expires

Cardholder Signature

☐ tax deductible donation amount $

(quantity) Passports @ $35= $

(quantity) Passports @ $20= $ student/senior

(quantity) Passports @ $100= $ 1st class

TOTAL enclosed $

please return your form to 7 Stages, 1105 Euclid Ave, Atlanta GA 30307
or you can order Passports at www.7stages.org

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U.S. postage

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Atlanta, GA
permit #2868

1105 Euclid Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30307
U.S.A.

404.522.0911

box office phone: 404.523.7647

www.7stages.org

boxoffice@7stages.org

Major funding is provided by the Fulton County Commission under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Additional funding is provided in part by the National Endowment for the Arts Theatre Program; the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly; and the City of Atlanta, Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

7 STAGES

Dear Group Representative,

Suppose I told you that your organization could make lots of money for a worthy cause simply by attending a theatrical performance at **7 Stages Theatre**. You would probably think I was selling you a lot of hype--right? Well, I'm not and it's true.

7 Stages Theatre is proud to announce not only an exciting and entertaining theatrical season, but also a terrific profit-sharing opportunity for your organization. Our plan is easy, lots of fun, and almost effortless. Now, that I have peaked your curiosity---here's the plan! **7 Stages** will provide your organization with group tickets, available at a special discounted price, and allow you to re-sell these tickets for whatever price you choose. It's that simple! Just think, if you purchase your tickets for $10 (you do not have to pay for tickets in advance) and re-sell them for $20 or more, then your organization makes a profit of $10 from each ticket. And, considering that our theatre holds over 200 people, you could conceivably take home a profit of more than $2,000 for simply enjoying a fun-filled evening of thought-provoking theatre. Sounds terrific? I thought so--but there's more!

Why share profits with your organization? It's simple, you help us introduce our theatre to new patrons, and we are excited!. For your help we are happy to share.

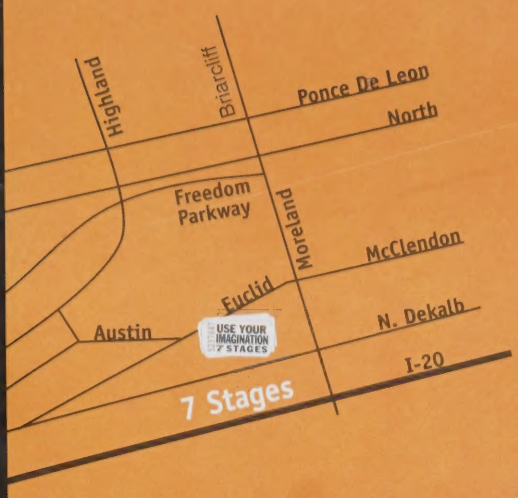
It's the easiest fund-raiser around. There are no tickets to print, no spaces to rent. There are no programs to put to together, no rehearsals, nobody to pay, and nothing to coordinate. Just sell your tickets, enjoy a show and take home lots of money. It's so easy, you could almost make it an overnight success.

I certainly hope you can see the lucrative profit-sharing opportunity and extraordinary entertainment value. Choose to make **7 Stages** your theatre in 2000! Call (404) 522-0911 and make your reservations **NOW!**

Sincerely,

Debi Barber
Audience Development Director

1105 Euclid Avenue Atlanta, GA 30307 USA Admin.: 404.522.0911 Box Office: 523.7647 Fax: 522.0913
www.7stages.w1.com



showtimes and prices are:

	ADULT	STUDENT/SENIOR
7:30 Wed/Thurs	$15	$10
8:00 Fri/Sat	$20	$15
5:00 Sun	$15	$10

***Sometimes show times and prices change for shows marked "special event."**

box office procedures:

three simple ways to order tickets
call our box office at 404.523.7647
go to our web site at www.7stages.org
e-mail us at boxoffice@7stages.org

you may pay with a credit card ahead of time, or pay at the door.

enjoy the
WhOle
experience

scintillating post-show discussions
Oct. 8 & 15-In Berlin, Feb. 11 & 18-Sweat, and April 22 & 29-Black Battles...

99¢ dress rehearsal/talk backs
(9/27-In Berlin, 1/31-Sweat, and 4/11-Black Battles...)

provocative art exhibits
Get fired up with Atlanta's hottest artists in our ever-changing lobby exhibits

The Olive Bistro Wine Bar & Cafe
Soothe body and soul with a relaxing drink or a tasty Mediterranean dish. You may even run into the actors after the show! Of course, you may always enjoy your beverages during the show.

fun group activities
have a fundraiser (make $ by just selling tickets!)
receive discounted tickets for groups over 10
plan a private reception for your members
schedule a talk back with the actors

we're also a unique venue for office parties, weddings, and all sorts of get-togethers.

plus...dozens of new and innovative Atlanta theatre companies doing unexpected things in our Backstage Theatre

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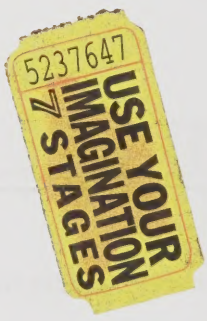

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Debi Barber
Audience Development Director

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www.7stages.w1.com

Your Organization Will Love These Shows
(Raise funds and have fun!)

In Berlin

September 26,- November 5, 2000

Adults Only

In Berlin is a world premiere written by 7 Stages playwright in residence and internationally known author Jim Grimsley. Grimsley takes us on a provocative journey with a bored gay southern man, who seeks something new and different in his life. A new life awaits him in Berlin where he spends his days observing ***sex acts*** as they are performed for him. This wild and rough journey becomes a spiritual quest, as he recalls his religious roots which are sharply contrasted with the physical compulsion of sexual domination. Watch out for the surprise ending! ***This play is definitely not for the children or the puritanical!***

HOT FLASHES, POWER SURGES AND PRIVATE SUMMERS

November 16-26, 2000

(1 WEEK ONLY)

YOU BETTER HURRY LADIES AND GENTS FOR THIS ONE!

Take a hilarious look at the many cycles of womanhood through the eyes of "upfront dynamo of frankness," **Rhodessa Jones**. Jones brings us a one woman show that's sexy, flashy, wild and laughable fun! **Flashes** allows us to commune around aging, sexuality and wisdom. **Flashes** is hot stuff! If frank talk about sexuality and related taboos offends you, then you probably want to steer clear of this production. ***For all of you with open minds, warm hearts and lots of stored up laughter, grab a glass of wine from our new cafe and let the good times roll!***

Isithukuthuku (Sweat!)

Jan. 31-Feb. 25, 2001

This United States premiere is written and directed by South African poet and political activist Walter Chakela. Fasten your seat belts and get ready for this high energy South African musical, complete with traditional dances and awesome musical sounds. **Sweat** is a deeply felt, poetic story which reveals the hard times of real people under apartheid. The best traditions of storytelling and singing of songs tell how fiery villagers and workers dealt with various government officials, communists, and more importantly themselves, during a time of tremendous upheaval and change. ***A must see for the entire family!!***

February 25- March 26, 2001
Freddie Hendricks Youth Ensemble of Atlanta
B.L.A.C.K.(Better Left a Colored Kid)
The Freddie Hendricks Youth Ensemble is back again with another high energy, foot stomping, telling it like it is production. The voices and choreography alone will amaze you and keep you wanting more! Get ready to be mentally challenged while being thoroughly entertained.

Black Battles with Dogs by Bernard- Maria Koltes.
April 11- May 6, 2001.

This fascinating play explores racial tensions, myths, loneliness and rage. A black man goes to a construction site in the middle of the West African forest to claim the body of his brother, who mysteriously died while working at the site. The French bourgeois workers are uncertain and suspicious at the appearance of the man, and to add to the confusion, the dead body cannot be found. Was the man murdered or did he die accidentally? French director Arthur Nauzyciel and his team of designer and composer, create a fabric of loneliness and rage at a location somewhere near the end of the world, at the edge of their minds.

It's too easy <u>not</u> to do!

-We print tickets for your organization-no charge -
-We produce the show
-We clean the theatre
-We print the programs
-We supply you with promotional flyers
-We supply ushers (unless you wish to do it yourself)
-We even have a lovely lobby available for receptions at no additional cost!
- Our staff is friendly and eager to assist your needs

Have fun and raise funds
Make Your Fund-raising Plans Today!
Call 404 523-0911

Three Great Ways To See Theatre at 7 Stages

Just Come

- At the door ticket prices are $15.00 & $20.00. Student and Senior prices are $5.00 off. Performances are Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30, Friday and Saturday at 8:00 and Sunday Matinee at 5:00pm.

Create Your Own Theatre Party

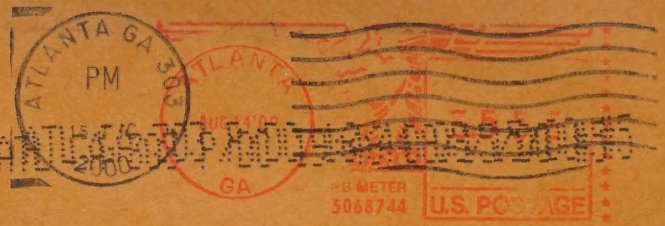
- With a group of ten or more arrange a theatre party and receive a substantial discount on your tickets. You can also dine at our new cafe or enjoy the many exciting restaurants in our Little Five Points community. Plan a fun filled evening for your organization by calling us today at 522-0911.

Fundraise For Your Organization

- It's true, you can now raise funds for your organization and have fun at the same time. And the best part is - it's almost effortless. What an exciting way to raise money! Want to hear more? Read the enclosed information or give us a call at 522-0911.

See You at the Theatre!

7 Stages
1105 Euclid Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30307-1925



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